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The voice of Edith Cowan: Australia's first woman parliamentarian 1921-1924

Harry C.J. Phillips

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The Voice of Edith Cowan

*Australia's First Woman Parliamentarian
1921 - 1924*



HARRY C.J. PHILLIPS



EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY

PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**THE VOICE OF EDITH COWAN
AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WOMAN PARLIAMENTARIAN, 1921-24**

HARRY C. J. PHILLIPS

**EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
CHURCHLANDS, WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

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PREFACE

On 12 March 1996 the Honourable Justice French, as Chancellor of Edith Cowan University, led a rededication ceremony of the Edith Cowan Clock Tower. This occasion, the seventy-fifth anniversary of Edith Cowan's election to the Legislative Assembly, was immediately followed by a breakfast at the nearby Parliament of Western Australia. During the evening a touring exhibition of Edith Cowan's life was launched titled "A Tough Nut to Crack". Then five days later Professor Geoffrey Bolton spoke at St George's Cathedral to celebrate a "Life of Service" by Edith Cowan.

The Voice of Edith Cowan is another contribution to the anniversary. The publication focuses upon her role as a parliamentarian. What, too, was the content of her speeches? How did she conduct herself as a parliamentarian? What was her legislative contribution? What was her impact as a politician? In an introductory essay tentative answers have been formulated to these questions.

Edith Cowan's parliamentary speeches have been organised by firstly recording each of her annual Address-in-Reply Speeches. This has been followed by the two private member's Bills (Administration Act Amendment Bill and Women's Legal Status Bill) she piloted through the Legislative Assembly. Her participation in a range of legislative measures, in subject alphabetical order, then follow. The Parliamentary Questions which Edith Cowan directed to Ministers are then presented before her Notices of Motion and Complimentary Remarks. In conclusion Edith Cowan's observations in the annual budget estimates are recorded.

In some instances it has not been feasible to print the complete *Hansard* record of the debates in which Edith Cowan participated. However, all of the remarks, save some interjections, which have been voiced by Edith Cowan are included in the text. Apart from the organisation of her speeches specified above an index of the subjects has also been included to assist readers to ascertain the views expressed by Edith Cowan in Parliament. A major objective of the publication has been to make Edith Cowan's parliamentary speeches more accessible to the public. Hopefully, too, it will be a useful addition to the collection at Edith Cowan's House, established with the initiative of the Faculty of Arts at the Joondalup Campus.

The need for the collation of Edith Cowan's parliamentary debates was first recognised by Professor Roy Lourens, Vice-Chancellor of Edith Cowan University. Hilary Shilkin, from the Community Affairs Department of Edith Cowan University, strongly supported the concept and facilitated arrangements for the publication. Then the opportunity for the task to be undertaken stemmed from the deliberations for a conference held at Edith Cowan University on 26 June 1996 titled "Woman in Public Life: Celebrating Edith Cowan". The conference had arisen from an initiative by Dr Elizabeth Constable, the Member for Floreat in the Legislative Assembly, to acknowledge the seventy-fifth anniversary of the election of Edith Cowan to Parliament. Hilary Shilkin mobilised her office, in co-operation with Dr Constable's staff, to help organise the celebration. A steering committee, chaired by Dr Constable, including MPs Dr Judyth Watson and the Hon. Barbara Scott had previously been formed with participation by Ms Janice Dudley (Murdoch University), Professor Patricia Crawford (University of Western Australia), Ms Sasha Messer and Mrs Elizabeth Borrello. Chief Justice David Malcolm, a descendent of Edith Cowan, gave one of the opening addresses titled "Women and the Law: Celebrating Edith Cowan". David Black, a member of the organising committee authored a book titled *Women Parliamentarians in Australia: 1921-1996*.

Several staff at the Parliament of Western Australia generously assisted in the copying and typing of the speeches. Tony Melia, Corrine Briant and Gerda Slany helped in this regard. Some of the initial typing, together with the final formatting, was undertaken by Pat Roach from the Legislative Assembly Annexe. Her special contribution is gratefully acknowledged. Gaye Godfrey artistically prepared the cover design. The editing of my initial draft of the introductory essay was undertaken by Cam Rielly, a valued colleague. Appreciation is expressed for the assistance offered by these people, and others, such as political science colleague Dr Quentin Beresford. My family members Jan, Marina, Michelle and Matthew gave their usual welcome support. However, I assume responsibility for any of the shortcomings of the publication.

Harry C. J. Phillips, Edith Cowan University, 4 August 1996.

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INTRODUCTION

EDITH COWAN: AUSTRALIA'S FIRST
WOMAN PARLIAMENTARIAN

Introduction

One historic outcome of the first State general election in Western Australia after World War 1 was the election of Edith Dircksey Cowan to the Legislative Assembly. At the age of sixty she had already established an outstanding record as a pioneer of women's involvement in public life (see Appendix 1). During the hostilities, in addition to her social welfare roles, she had become immersed in the war effort, leading to being awarded the O.B.E. However, it is the distinction in 1921 of being the nation's first woman parliamentarian that has given her such prominence and led to her being one of the most celebrated of Australian women. After her death on 9 June 1932, a clock tower at the entrance to Kings Park, near central Perth, was built as a memorial: it is thought to be the first civic monument to honour an Australian woman.¹ In 1984, a new Federal electorate in Western Australia was named in Cowan's honour and six years later, the former Western Australian College of Advanced Education became Edith Cowan University, the first university to be named after an Australian woman. Then, in 1995, the Reserve Bank made certain that nearly all Australians could recognise her portrait, and perhaps her contribution to society, when she was featured on the \$50 dollar bank note.

A scholarly biography of Edith Cowan (1861-1932) by her grandson, Peter Cowan, entitled *A Unique Position*,² was published in 1978. In her opening parliamentary address, Cowan had accurately portrayed herself as being in a "unique position". Some shorter articles have been written about her life's work and an exhibition has been mounted depicting the range of her adult achievements after the tragedies of her youth. Edith Cowan's mother, Mary Brown, was a teacher and the daughter of the Colony's first chaplain, Reverend John Wittenoom. She died giving birth to her sixth child and Edith Brown, only seven years of age, was sent to Perth from Glengarry (near Geraldton) for her education. Unfortunately, the young Edith's adolescence was further troubled in 1876 by the ordeal of her father's trials and execution for the murder of his second wife. Then in 1879, at only 18 years of age, Edith Brown married James Cowan, who was a postmaster and later a Magistrate of Perth. They began their family with the birth of a daughter, Dircksey, in 1880, followed by four other children: Norman (1882), Hilda (1883), Ida (1885) and Helen (1891).

For much of their married life, Edith and James Cowan lived in Malcolm Street, West Perth. It was within walking distance of the city centre and Parliament and it is Cowan's role as a parliamentarian which is the focus of this study. As the Member for West Perth, she served only one term (from 1921 to 1924), but it is timely, with the seventy-fifth anniversary of her election, that Edith Cowan's record in the "House on the Hill" be more fully documented and assessed. What was her legacy to the women who have followed her lead and been elected to Australia's parliaments?

Election

The right of women to vote was regarded as a natural right by Edith Cowan, and a self-evident extension to this was the right to sit in parliament. The women's franchise was granted in 1899, some five years after South Australia, but the legal ban on the entry of women to the Parliament of Western Australia remained until 1920. Edith Cowan had been active in promoting both reforms with the gap between the two measures being longer in Western Australia than in the other States. However, Edith Cowan's decision to contest the first election open to women in the State "was not part of a long term plan".³ Apparently her decision to stand was made suddenly, only four weeks before the poll. According to Edith Cowan her election committee held the view that the domestic and social legislation of the State had not been given enough attention in the period of post war reconstruction.⁴ The network of supporters, mainly women, who had worked with her in various capacities backed her candidature as a Nationalist. This was possible because the Nationalist party "cadres" in that era regularly endorsed more than one candidate.

¹ Sawyer, Marian and Simms, Marian (1993), *A Women's Place: Women and Politics in Australia*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, p. 91.

² Cowan, Peter (1978), *A Unique Position: A Biography of Edith Dircksey Cowan 1861-1932*, Perth: University of Western Australia.

³ Western Australia, Parliamentary Debates (WAPD), 21 July 1921, p.15.

⁴ *West Australian*, 14 March 1921.

For West Perth, another endorsed Nationalist candidate was the sitting member, namely Thomas Draper. The latter was the Attorney General in the government of James Mitchell. One theory⁵ is that the Nationalists were prepared to endorse Edith Cowan because she posed no electoral threat to Draper. The *West Australian* newspaper was dismissive of her prospects and of the four women candidates in the 1921 election Ada Bromham in Claremont, backed by the influential Bessie Rischbieth, was considered the most likely to poll well.⁶ Edith Cowan is said to have indicated that "she had little chance of success".⁷ Yet there were reports that Draper had lost some credibility by stating openly that he intended to move to the Supreme Court bench after the election. Moreover, while the Australian Labor Party had not entered a candidate for what was considered "an establishment" seat, Edith Cowan's commitments to so many social causes meant it was likely some Labor votes would go Cowan's way. A weekly publication of the Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Nurses Association indicated that as Edith Cowan had earned a great deal of respect and admiration in the community she had a chance of defeating the Attorney General.⁸ Ironically, it was Draper, as Attorney General, who had been responsible for the legislation which allowed women to become members of parliament.

Edith Cowan's strategists were aware that West Perth had an enrolment of 2,519 women and 1,934 men.⁹ The non-compulsory electoral turnout was 69 per cent, with a minimal difference between men and women. She won by 46 votes after the preferences of a third candidate, Ebenezer Allen (who was previously a Ministerialist but had also become a Nationalist) had been distributed. From 1911 to 1917 Allen had been the member for West Perth. Edith Cowan attributed her victory to non-party support for women contending that it proved "women can and do stand by women".¹⁰ *West Australian* editorial analysis of the result gave credence to this thesis, but the temptation of some Labor supporters to vote against the Minister (Mr Draper) "on a matter of principle" was also asserted.¹¹ Nevertheless, Edith Cowan was so delighted with her victory that each member of her campaign committee was presented with a brooch inscribed "The Nut". This was a gumnut cracked down the middle conveying the message that the West Perth seat had been difficult to win, or colloquially "a tough nut to crack".

The historic election of a woman was widely reported in the press with banner headlines. It should also be noted that even at the beginning of her parliamentary career Edith Cowan echoed the complaint of many of her parliamentary colleagues with her claim that "as usual I was to a certain extent misreported in the Press...."¹² Indeed some of the newspaper observations were disparaging. The authoritative *Melbourne Age* contended that a "Parliament composed wholly or mainly of women politicians is not a prospect to be regarded with enthusiasm..."¹³ More encouraging were the thoughts expressed in the local *Daily News* although it reflected a narrow view of Edith Cowan's role as a representative: having the "right to expression in the legislature" of the care of future mothers.¹⁴ The weekly *Western Mail* editorial, written several days after the election, recognised there was considerable interest in Edith Cowan's success. It was constructively argued "she will be the spokesperson of a school of thought which has an undeniable right to representation in the legislature, and her record of honorary social service entitles her to the

⁵ Choules, Michelle (1988), *Women in Western Australian Parliamentary Politics, 1921-1968*, Unpublished B.A. Honors Dissertation, Curtin University of Technology, p. 37.

⁶ *West Australian*, 23 February 1921

⁷ Cowan, Ibid, p. 156.

⁸ Choules, Ibid, p. 38

⁹ Sawyer and Simms, Ibid, p.87.

¹⁰ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.15.

¹¹ *West Australian*, 14 March 1921.

¹² WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.17.

¹³ *Melbourne Age*, 15 March 1921.

¹⁴ *Daily News*, 14 March 1921.

distinction".¹⁵ Meanwhile the *West Australian* judged it was unlikely that after a few general elections parliament would be full of women "unless women show a greater aptitude for the management of public affairs than has been displayed by exclusively male assemblies".¹⁶

Edith Cowan did not favour the electoral provisions under which she won the seat. Voting was voluntary whereas Edith Cowan spoke frequently about the democratic and educative benefits of compulsory voting. She was also strongly influenced by J.S. Mill's writings, not only with respect to women's issues, but also on electoral provisions such as proportional representation. Edith Cowan did campaign for the reduction of parliamentary salaries on similar grounds to Mill, arguing that salaries could attract political careerists "who sacrificed independence of judgement to the need to preserve their source of income".¹⁷ On at least one occasion she spoke against parliamentarians receiving remuneration for committee work, except allowances for out of pocket expenses.¹⁸

Of course Edith Cowan, did not become (like Mill) a career politician. Instead, she forcefully spoke her mind, donated much of her parliamentary salary to worthy causes and pursued her policy objectives without always being sufficiently aware of the electoral consequences. Her election pamphlet, in accordance with the practice of the day referred to "Mrs James Cowan". Cast in colloquial terms it specified 19 initiatives she would support and it provides a guide to her Maiden Speech, now sometimes known as the Debut Speech (see Appendix 2).

Debut ('Maiden') Speech, Address-in-Reply (21 July 1921)

Although elected on 12 March 1921 Edith Cowan did not make her Maiden Speech until 21 July of the same year. Recognising the symbolic significance of her presence, the government bestowed on her the honour of moving the Address-in Reply Speech. Parliamentarians use this speech, an annual response to the Governor's Opening of Parliament, as a medium to canvass matters of constituency concern. Conscious of her "unique position", she immediately emphasised "the necessity which exists for other women being here".¹⁹ The need to alter the language of Parliament to acknowledge the feminine gender was soon appreciated. One sign that Edith Cowan's presence concerned some members was evident in the chamber's failure to accord her the traditional respect of an uninterrupted Maiden or Debut Speech.

Edith Cowan contended that from a woman's perspective the State Children's Act had been flawed. She considered it objectionable that a child convicted before a State Children's Court should be labelled as a "State Child" until the age of eighteen years. Women architects were needed to ensure that homes were satisfactorily planned and government buildings properly constructed. There was a need for a woman on the Price Fixing Commission. Her theme, justified by references to the scriptures, was the need for women's representation. As she said "the views of both sides [men and women] are more than ever needed in Parliament today".²⁰

Aware of legislative measures in New South Wales, but two decades ahead of its Federal introduction, Edith Cowan pressed for a child and maternity endowment. In her judgement, the prevailing basic wage for a man, his wife and three children was inadequate. She cited a newspaper article endorsing the principle of endowment, "thereby recognising the service rendered to the community by the mother in the care and nurture of the child, such payment to be a charge on the whole community and recognised as a right, and not associated in any way with the economic circumstances of the husband and father".²¹

¹⁵ *The Western Mail*, 17 March 1921.

¹⁶ *West Australian*, 28 March 1921.

¹⁷ Sawyer and Simms, *Ibid*, p. 88.

¹⁸ WAPD, 9 November 1921, p. 1597.

¹⁹ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p. 15.

²⁰ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p. 15.

²¹ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.18.

Edith Cowan chastised the Minister for Railways for the one shilling pram levy imposed on mothers who travelled to the city for shopping. The Minister was obviously impressed with the argument as he interjected with the statement, "I will withdraw it at once".²² Far more controversial was her suggestion that the Arbitration Act, a statute in which she showed keen interest, should be amended to give women the right to vote when a union contemplated strike action. According to Edith Cowan "many a strike would be prevented if the women had the right to vote".²³ What was not clear was how the mechanism would function if women were not part of workforce as registered union members.

In the interests of ratepayers and particularly of women, who had to use water for cooking, washing, and other domestic purposes, Edith Cowan advocated action, "to ensure the cheapest water supply".²⁴ This was a matter of particular concern to her metropolitan West Perth residents. Significantly, Edith Cowan also voiced rural concerns about the quality of education. She said "it does seem an anomaly that we should be about to spend [£1,400] on a gymnasium in the city while some of our teachers outback are living in canvas bedrooms containing at one end the season's supply of bonedust".²⁵

An awareness of about rural matters also led Edith Cowan to refer to immigration. She said "it is most necessary that we should select only the right class of immigrants. We earnestly hope that proper examination will be made of immigrants before they come to the State, and that we have only the best possible type".²⁶ In this instance "class" presumably meant "quality". In the same speech Edith Cowan had made the interesting claim that "as a woman I desire class consciousness of every kind to be eliminated". When an interjector told her to "start on those around you", Edith Cowan responded with the assertion "I am willing to do that. I have always stood for having no class consciousness amongst us".²⁷ She was deeply interested in social policy matters and expressed concern that the Governor's Speech made no reference to a home for people with intellectual disabilities: she also referred to the need for adequate old age and invalid pensions.

Although Edith Cowan raised a range of reform measures the barriers to legislative success were going to be formidable. As a backbencher, and only woman in the chamber, she also rejected the advantages of attempting to garner party support. As she told members:²⁸

I am a Nationalist, and I belong to no party in this House. I was sent to uphold law and order and constitutional government, and it will be my desire to assist in carrying out these objects in a proper and satisfactory manner; while I discharge my duties here I shall be responsible only to my own constituents....There are too many here today who are possessed of the old party spirit.

Second Address-in-Reply Speech (9 August 1922)

In her second Address-in-Reply speech Edith Cowan again displayed an independent mind on a range of issues although she did not attack "the old party spirit". In a stance that probably would have concerned some of her West Perth business constituents she contended that the financing of a mooted Hospital Bill should be on the basis of a progressive income tax. Before the concept of progressive taxation had become fully part of the taxation regime Edith Cowan said "no matter what an individual's wage or salary

²² WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.18.

²³ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.18.

²⁴ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.16.

²⁵ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p. 17.

²⁶ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.18.

²⁷ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p.18.

²⁸ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p. 15.

may be, each one should be prepared to pay his or her quota pro-rata".²⁹ Presumably she envisaged a similar formula when she spoke of providing extra accommodation for women at the Perth Public Hospital and an aged women's home at Fremantle. Edith Cowan warned Premier Mitchell that this need would escalate if more immigrants, especially women, were brought to the State as part of his Group Settlement Scheme.

The Scheme attracted Edith Cowan's particular interest. She sought more details about the number of families and single men and women expected to arrive. In a novel suggestion she suggested that poultry farming held good prospects, particularly for women. This theory compelled an interjection from Philip Collier (Opposition Leader and later Premier), who queried its validity. In fact, Edith Cowan reflected upon the wisdom of settling new immigrants in the South-West and leaving the wheat belt for "our own people". Again indicative of her capacity for lateral thinking, she mused "it might be a good idea to encourage development in the North-West and spend some of the money there".³⁰

Edith Cowan observed that many of the Group Settlement women had come from English factory settings with no knowledge of the work awaiting them in the Australian bush. Some of the same people had health deficiencies. As Edith Cowan said "even tubercular people and mental deficient have been sent out to us. Of these unfortunate classes we have quite enough here without adding to their numbers through our special scheme for immigration".³¹ A possible solution was the appointment of a doctor in England to ascertain the health of the prospective immigrants. In addition, displaying her usual recognition of their special needs, she sought the employment of another doctor with specific responsibilities for women and children.

In recalling a recent settlers' conference that she had attended Edith Cowan noted that she was impressed with the information conveyed about the development of soils and farming operations. Significantly, she then remarked "in their study of agricultural problems they had forgotten the human side, forgotten what was due to their uncomplaining women".³² Recalling her younger rural days, she said "it must be remembered that the woman on the farm is far more lonely than is the man. She is not the first to be considered when a trip to town is mooted, nor does she have the healthy outdoor occupation of the men of her household".³³ Edith Cowan suggested that "very much more consideration might reasonably be given to the lonely woman in the country. Telephones ought to be provided as the means of breaking down their terrible isolation".³⁴

The adequacy of wages for the household unit was of continuing interest. In her Maiden (Debut) Speech Edith Cowan had spoken of the need to employ the expertise of economists from the universities to improve the effectiveness of industrial awards.³⁵ In this speech, she expressed the hope that amendments to the Arbitration Act would include a provision making continuity of work an obligation for employment. Given the extent of unemployment and the presence of industrial unrest, Edith Cowan was clearly opposed to any practices that provided an incentive not to work or, even more seriously, to strike.³⁶

A special problem which Edith Cowan labelled an "evil" was the "unduly high" wages paid to boys and girls. Although not desiring the lowering of wage levels, she said "something should be done to prevent irresponsible young people being better paid than are many married men and women". Reminiscent of

²⁹ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 156.

³⁰ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 157.

³¹ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 157.

³² WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 158.

³³ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 158.

³⁴ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 158.

³⁵ WAPD, 21 July 1921, p. 15.

³⁶ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 157.

Aristotle, she complained that many young people "do nothing towards the upkeep of the home...they are out enjoying themselves in all sorts of places...". She had "often wondered whether the age wage system is a good one. The results are so unsatisfactory to parents and the community generally".³⁷ In her opinion, the grades of the workers in all forms of service should be assessed and pay schedules accordingly adjusted.

Again Edith Cowan suggested the Arbitration Act should be amended to permit mothers a vote as to whether there should be strikes: in her opinion, a referendum would approve such a measure. Discussion of the Act also led Edith Cowan to comment on the eight-hours day, with eight hours for recreation and rest and eight hours for sleep. This prescription was thought to be the best theory for a community. However, Edith Cowan was concerned that the introduction of double pay beyond eight hours was eroding the time concepts and leading to unemployment.

In discussing causes of unemployment Edith Cowan made clear her strong objections to gambling, asserting it led to a "distaste for wholesome work". She urged Parliament to make it illegal for those less than 21 years of age to take any part in carnivals and lotteries. Youth should be encouraged to be more thrifty and contribute to the "saving element" of the community. Edith Cowan quoted authorities that cited gambling as one of the "vilest" of evils. It was not only an "ungentlemanly" habit, but it was also "unladylike", as women were beginning to indulge in gambling.³⁸

It was Edith Cowan's habit in the Address-in-Reply speeches to jump from topic to topic. She spoke about the need for cabinet probity and gave attention to the necessity for governments to uphold campaign promises. Quotations from the British orator, reformer and statesman John Bright (1811-1899) were tabled. On a more mundane level she was concerned that a commitment for a Como tramway was not being upheld. There were reports that an allowance payment to State children had been reduced by 50 per cent: it was speculated that this action may have been unconstitutional.³⁹

Although Edith Cowan's election pamphlet had made reference to the need to maintain constitutional government she clearly had in mind some changes to the operations of the cabinet system. She felt there should be more honorary ministers but that their respective salaries should not be drawn from those of the portfolio Ministers. She also said "it is a great pity that the system of elective ministries is not in operation here. I think such a system would give most satisfactory results, and I hope it will be introduced as soon as possible".⁴⁰ Presumably Edith Cowan had in mind either the Labor Party procedure of electing of ministers from caucus or the more radical reform of Ministers being drawn from outside parliamentary ranks. Only constitutional convention prevented the implementation of the latter but she foresaw difficulties in its introduction.

To conclude Edith Cowan urged a conference of representatives from State Parliaments on the question of federation. In fact a Commonwealth Royal Commission was soon established to investigate how the finances of Western Australia had been affected by federation. She reminded Parliament that in the past she had spoken about federation because it was 30 years before its time. Presumably she, like her husband, had voted against the acceptance of the new Federal Constitution in the 1900 referendum.⁴¹ However, by 1922, Edith Cowan had decided "It is time that some of us with the sense got together and remedied the condition of affairs now existing, because the deficit cannot be satisfactorily coped with until we receive more revenue from taxation now taken unfairly by the Federal Government".⁴² Of course Edith Cowan died in the year preceding the 1933 referendum when Western Australians voted to secede from the Commonwealth. Her voluntary organisations did not include a secessionist group but it is likely she would have at least supported the referendum proposal as a protest to the Commonwealth.

³⁷ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 158.

³⁸ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 159.

³⁹ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 159.

⁴⁰ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 156.

⁴¹ Cowan, *Ibid*, p. 278.

⁴² WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 160.

Third Address-in-Reply Speech (9 August, 1923)

After two years of parliamentary experience, Edith Cowan issued a challenge to those who held leadership roles in various community interest and pressure groups to stand for election to Parliament. In her view, the parliamentary socialisation process gave members the opportunity to "learn to be balanced".⁴³ The occasions which drew this observation were statements attributed to the President of the Primary Producers Association (PPA) about the difficulties experienced by the Group Settlement Scheme immigrants. Compared with the "Groupies", she felt the early settlers, including members of her family, had suffered greater hardships. For instance a major obstacle, now removed, had been danger from "natives". With the President of the PPA, and other interest group leaders in mind, she complained "it is much nicer to keep in the background and pull strings and direct other people what to do, in fact to be the power behind the throne, than to stand up here [in Parliament] and be the target of all sections of the community".⁴⁴

The optimism which Premier Mitchell had displayed about the Group Settlement scheme was fully endorsed by Edith Cowan. However, she was concerned plans to establish an agricultural college, which could "afford sensible and practical training for young men who wish to gain a knowledge of agriculture in different centres"⁴⁵ would not come to fruition. Another reservation about the Premier's record was his failure in a recent speech to recognise the splendid work which had been done by the Women's Immigration Auxiliary. Depicting herself as the "guide, philosopher and friend" of women in the community Edith Cowan said "I have come to the conclusion that it is not altogether wise to allow the women's side of the work of this community to always be hidden, as with the light, under the bushel".⁴⁶

Another sector for which Edith Cowan sought more recognition was the public (civil) service. She regretted that Parliament "as the highest body in the land, never gave them a note or word of appreciation".⁴⁷ The "carping criticism" often directed at that body of men and women, including her husband, overlooked the fact that civil servants are a "decided asset to the community in every respect". Not surprisingly she supported salary grade increases that were under review. A similar view had been expressed in her 1922 Address-in-Reply Speech, although on that occasion she had admitted that "waste goes on in government departments".⁴⁸ Furthermore, she suggested the appointment of a commissioner- who was a commercial man with banking experience.

To justify the support for the salary rise Edith Cowan gave examples of public enterprise. Public servants had been the first body of people in the State to start vocational training for returned soldiers after the World War. Moreover, they had established the distress fund which was such a valuable aid organisation during hostilities. However, she also reminded members when discussing a project for the manufacture of pipes that the government should assist private enterprise. She said "I am opposed to the setting up of another expensive plant in order that the Government might do this work themselves, to the detriment of private enterprise".⁴⁹

One facet of "private enterprise" that continued to trouble Edith Cowan was the publication of undesirable books and picture postcards which verged on the "indecent". If the Government could not deal with the matter satisfactorily under the Act already on the statute book, there was a need to establish a board of censors. Edith Cowan believed she had the support of the Police Department, and added "without being

⁴³ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 187.

⁴⁴ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 187.

⁴⁵ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 190.

⁴⁶ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 188.

⁴⁷ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 189.

⁴⁸ WAPD, 9 August 1922, p. 156.

⁴⁹ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 193.

the least bit a wowser, I cannot imagine any hon. member thinking that nothing should be done to check this evil".⁵⁰

One course of government action which was praised was the decision to build a mental detention ward. Edith Cowan, however, called upon the Government to reconsider the site. The Point Resolution location, on the Swan River, was regarded as most valuable for public use. A Labor interjector, William Angwin, who questioned Mrs Cowan throughout her parliamentary term, claimed experts had recommended a river site. Edith Cowan then confessed "I am not an expert, and perhaps I have no right to criticise the opinions of experts, but while they may theoretically know what is best, they are not always infallible in such matters...Our reserves, especially those with river frontages, should in my opinion be left for the people for all time".⁵¹

With her support for the protection of river frontages and later a Swan River Board, together with recognition of the beauty of farmland, Edith Cowan gave indication that she would be a strong supporter of modern environmental causes. She argued for a new town planning institution with more effective taxation methods to help ensure the success of planning proposals: it would be wise, providing there was some uniformity, to allow local bodies the option of taxing improved or unimproved value. In this context she also sought the introduction of a Workers' Homes Act, to apply to the metropolitan area. Based on a Queensland scheme it would provide homes for people earning incomes of not more than 160 to 200 pounds per year. Furthermore the occupants should eventually be able to purchase their homes, which should not be above a certain cost, say £450.⁵²

As was usual in most of her speeches Edith Cowan raised health matters of women and children. Producing statistics which indicated the child death rate in Western Australia was higher than in Queensland, she argued for more funds to be directed to saving children's lives. Training, too, should be given to mothers about infant health. She felt that some of the budget figures gave a deceptive picture of what was being devoted to health. In her judgement a large proportion of the health budget was being absorbed by the sanitation of government and public buildings.⁵³

Edith Cowan's third Address-in-Reply Speech was her last under the umbrella of that parliamentary procedure. She had used this medium to articulate her ideas on a wide range of community ideas and policy issues, many of them outside the interests of the major parties. Other parliamentary processes such as question time, notices of motion, scrutiny of the budget estimates and legislative debates were all employed to make her mark. However, being outside Cabinet and often adopting an independent stance were going to be factors which militated against her being able to achieve major legislative reform. She had acknowledged that it was necessary to gain a grasp of parliamentary procedure and by the end of the eleventh parliament she could claim to have effectively gained this experience.

Remarkably, before the end of her three-year parliamentary term Edith Cowan had succeeded in piloting through two private member's Bills, the Administration Act Amendment Bill (1922) and the Women's Legal Status Bill (1923). As in most Westminster-type parliaments, private members Bills, particularly those of legislative significance, are rarely passed in Western Australia. Nevertheless such Bills are still public Bills which are distinct from Private Bills. The latter are introduced for the purpose of assisting a select group of citizens. They are also rare in the Western Australian Parliament although on at least two occasions Edith Cowan was recorded debating aspects of private Bills pertaining to Perpetual Trustees and Western Australian Trustees. In her short parliamentary career Edith Cowan demonstrated keen interest in inheritance legislation. This was best exemplified with the Administration Act Amendment Bill.

Administration Act Amendment Bill (1922)

⁵⁰ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 191.

⁵¹ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 189.

⁵² WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 189.

⁵³ WAPD, 9 August 1923, 189.

Legislation sponsored by Edith Cowan which gave equal inheritance rights to mothers where a child died intestate and without issue came under the broad title of the Administration Act Amendment Bill (1922). This was believed to be the first instance of a woman in the British Empire initiating a Bill which finally received the assent of the Monarch's representative, the Governor. The Premier, Sir James Mitchell, was conscious of the significance of the occasion and sought to "congratulate the member for West Perth on the reception of her Bill...in the Chamber. No measure was ever more generally approved. If only I could get my Bills as warmly accepted by the House, I would have an easier time. I readily support the Bill".⁵⁴

In moving the second reading, Edith Cowan said "I have been asked to move this Bill in the interests of the mothers of Western Australia...I feel sure the House will be with me...more especially when hon. members realise that it is the earnest desire of women to be placed on an equal footing with men in this respect".⁵⁵ However, this prompted an interjection from William Angwin, a Fremantle Labor Party identity, who said "Can you give us some reason why we should pass the Bill"? Mrs Cowan responded immediately with the assertion "the reason that the Bill is absolutely just is sufficient. During the war it was found that the want of an amendment such as the measure proposes was very detrimental in many instances to mothers who were left in a more or less dependent condition, and whose sons died intestate".⁵⁶

In response William Angwin indicated that although he supported the second reading "it is customary ...when introducing a Bill to advance some reasons for the measure". George Lambert, the Kalgoorlie Labor MLA, also interjected "I think you would be well advised to give more reasons than you have yet given, because there are very wide principles involved in the Bill. Parliament is not moved by sentiment". This led Edith Cowan to retort "If it is not moved by sentiment, then it should be moved by justice".⁵⁷

Edith Cowan was comfortable in the knowledge that the Premier had opened his remarks with the statement that "the Bill constitutes a perfectly fair proposal". Interestingly, Premier Mitchell had mused "I know that if it be a matter of control in the family, the wife is superior. I have experienced it. In every walk of life women are more than holding their own".⁵⁸ However, Edith Cowan deemed it was not necessary to present a lengthy, reasoned case for an amendment to legislation which she regarded as self evident according to her perception of natural law. To her "the existing law [had] operated unjustly in many cases", so all that was necessary was to appeal to the members' "sense of justice".⁵⁹

Some members thought the Administration Act required a more comprehensive review. However, Edith Cowan, now familiar with the slow pace of parliamentary procedure, was anxious not to introduce any controversial amendments that might jeopardise its passage. This tactic enabled the second reading stage to be passed, but in Committee Charles Latham moved an amendment based on an objection he had raised during the second reading. Latham, a future Deputy Premier and long-serving Leader of the Opposition, disapproved of a private member introducing a measure of this importance, arguing that it should be the province of the Government because many of the ramifications could be more fully investigated.⁶⁰

The complications which Edith Cowan had hoped to avoid with her two-clause amendment Bill could not be ignored and she had to write to the Crown Solicitor and seek other legal opinions. However, by a majority of two votes progress was reported on the Bill and it was passed in the Legislative Assembly.⁶¹

⁵⁴ WAPD, 7 September 1922, p. 653.

⁵⁵ WAPD, 7 September 1922, p. 653.

⁵⁶ WAPD, 7 September 1922, p. 652.

⁵⁷ WAPD, 7 September 1922, p. 650.

⁵⁸ WAPD, 7 September 1922, p. 652.

⁵⁹ WAPD, 7 September 1922, p. 650.

⁶⁰ WAPD, 28 September 1922, p. 937.

⁶¹ WAPD, 17 October 1921, p. 1077.

In the Legislative Council it was also recognised that the Bill was historic and there was broad support-but reservations existed and an amendment was passed, which exceeded the length of the original Bill, pertaining to estates valued at more than 1,000 pounds.⁶² The Legislative Assembly accepted the amendment for to do otherwise would have "imperilled" the measure.⁶³

Edith Cowan's Bill received strong support from women's organisations and was widely reported in the newspapers. However, as her grandson has observed there existed a distrust about such a measure and about "lady legislators". A Fremantle solicitor was reported as saying that the Acts dealing with these matters were "in a state of absolute chaos". Moreover, he added, "It is time we had legislators who thoroughly study the position and then legislate accordingly. This is the first effort of a woman legislator, and it is much to be deplored".⁶⁴ Not surprisingly, despite ill-health during the later stages of the debate, Edith Cowan hit back at the criticisms, which undoubtedly confirmed her resolve to have women enter the legal profession.

Women's Legal Status Bill (1923)

In moving the second reading of the Women's Legal Status Bill Edith Cowan claimed she was acting "at the instance of the women of the community through their various organisations". She said "we are desirous of having women put on a reasonably fair footing in point of holding offices and positions now closed to them".⁶⁵ She expressed concern that opponents of the Bill might contend that the Interpretation Act, which prescribed that statutory references to the masculine gender included the feminine gender, would suffice. Thereafter in her typical dour manner, Edith Cowan, a voracious reader and extensive traveller, described how women were admitted to the Bar in other Australian States and many overseas countries.

The legislation was closely modelled on the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, passed in Britain in 1919. This Act specified that a person should not be disqualified "by sex or marriage" from exercising any public function, from holding civil or judicial office, from practising law or from entering any other profession.⁶⁶ While the House of Commons *Hansard* recorded a great breadth of opinions on the matter, the Western Australian parliamentary debate proved to be a forerunner of many later equal opportunity legislative initiatives: few, if any, members are prepared to speak against the principles of the legislation and rarely are divisions taken to publicly record opposition. Reservations about the Bills can only be gleaned from interjections and public comments outside Parliament. In relation to these issues the phrase "Coward's Castle" is sometimes more appropriate than when it is applied to the use of parliamentary privilege.

Early in the debate, "Lavender Bill" Marshall (Murchison) pondered whether the Bill would "be cutting all the [men] solicitors and barristers out of their jobs". This led Charles Latham, adopting a similar stance to Premier Mitchell to ask, "surely you do not want generally to bring women down to the level of men"? To this claim Edith Cowan replied "No, I want to raise men to the level of women. That may be possible".⁶⁷

There was, however, one very important amendment. Exclusion on the grounds of marriage was excised from the Bill, without a vote in the Committee stage. Mitchell had recounted the main argument when he spoke of the need to preserve the structure of the family in which wives were economically dependent on their husbands.⁶⁸ William Angwin, believed that to include the words "or marriage" in the legislation "would have the effect of taking mothers away from their children". He claimed "his wife would not go..." Indeed

⁶² WAPD, 18 November 1922, p. 1222.

⁶³ WAPD, 23 November 1922, p. 1762.

⁶⁴ Cowan, *Ibid*, pp. 204-205.

⁶⁵ WAPD, 5 September 1923, p. 592.

⁶⁶ Sawyer and Simms, p. 89.

⁶⁷ WAPD, 5 September 1922, p. 596.

⁶⁸ WAPD, 7 November 1923, . 1376.

"those asking for these powers number perhaps a dozen in Perth and the country". Philip Collier added his correction "none in the country".⁶⁹

Politics in Edith Cowan's era was conducted without opinion polls to give some credibility to what was claimed to constitute public opinion. Again, she was not prepared to jeopardise the Bill by insisting that all its sections be retained. She was conscious that Parliament was soon to rise for the 1924 election. Her "women's groups" had probably informed her that she might not be re-elected. So she was undoubtedly comforted by the Premier's commitment to the passage of the Bill before the end of the session.⁷⁰ This did not mean that Edith Cowan avoided forcefully presenting her arguments to the Legislative Assembly. She chose to quote at length from Havelock Ellis, a prominent but provocative sociologist, who claimed:⁷¹

We may regard all discussion on the everlasting alleged inferiority of women as absolutely futile and foolish and also that the conviction of some men that women are not fitted to exercise various social and political duties, and the conviction of some women that men are a morally inferior sex, are both alike absurd...We are not at liberty to introduce any artificial sex barrier into social concerns, for the hope of our future civilisation lies in the development in equal freedom of both masculine and feminine elements in life.

After listening to Edith Cowan quoting from Havelock Ellis, John Thomson (Claremont), interjected with the observation "I do not know him, and I do not want to know him".⁷² Thomson immediately joined his colleagues for a unanimous vote on the second reading. Nevertheless, after the important Committee stage amendments, the Bill moved to the Legislative Council where it received quick passage, although one member was concerned about the appropriate attire for ladies practising in the courts.⁷³

It was Edith Cowan's last successful action in the Legislative Assembly, and it was very significant for the cause of equal opportunity. However, although her private member's Bills were of both symbolic and practical value for women, she also participated in many other debates, voicing her interpretation of the women's perspective. In addition, she was often involved in debates where she felt she could effectively represent her constituency without the shackles of party discipline.

Other Legislative Stances

The volumes of *Hansard* register that Edith Cowan often spoke in legislative debates. Although the presentation of the second reading phase was invariably a Ministerial task, in some instances she was influential in seeking amendments on the floor of the House. A few months after her Maiden (Debut) Speech, she strongly supported the Nurses Registration Bill, which aimed to provide standards of training and registration for qualified nurses. According to Edith Cowan the nursing associations were strongly supportive of the Bill. In her judgement "women who take up nursing and do such splendid self-sacrificing work are the best people to know what is required for their profession".⁷⁴ Some of the speakers were reluctant to permit the government to have a regulatory role. Without doubt, however, Edith Cowan foresaw the need for quality standard nursing qualifications which a university named in her honour some seventy years later seeks to uphold.

In the same week as the debate on the Nurses Registration Bill, Edith Cowan spoke to an amendment to the Factories and Shops Act. The legislation concerned holidays to be observed and hours certain business premises (particularly pharmacies) should be permitted to remain open. When a new clause was

⁶⁹ WAPD, 7 November 1922, p. 1382.

⁷⁰ WAPD, 29 November 1923, p. 1732.

⁷¹ WAPD, 7 November 1923, p. 1381.

⁷² WAPD, 7 November 1923, p. 1382.

⁷³ WAPD, 11 November 1923, p. 1777.

⁷⁴ WAPD, 13 October 1921, p. 1233.

added, which would have prevented an extension to the working hours for women and children, she opposed the move.⁷⁵ It was a delicate decision, as the stance was viewed in some quarters as being contrary to the welfare of women and children. The provocative William Angwin (later Agent General from 1927 to 1933) claimed this demonstrated "that if women want proper representation in Parliament, they should have men to represent them. Apparently they will receive more sympathy from men than from women".⁷⁶ In fact Edith Cowan wanted women to have the right to fix their own hours by appeal to arbitration. Interpreted in this light her action was in sympathy with the equal opportunity principles which she espoused. Nevertheless, Andrew McCallum (South Fremantle), was so annoyed with Edith Cowan's stance that he complained "every time we try to get reform for women, the cry goes up that we are trying to prejudice the employment of women".⁷⁷

Another debate, in the same busy week, on the State Children's Act Amendment Bill did not compromise Edith Cowan. The Bill contained provisions she had advocated over many years through her commitment to children's welfare. As a foundation member of the Children's Protection Society in 1906 she had been influential in seeking the passage of the first State Children's Act in 1907, which provided for closed children's courts. In 1915, in accordance with her view that women should be magistrates and court officers she became one of the first five women magistrates appointed to the Children's Court. It will be recalled that women at that time were still barred from becoming justices of the peace or practising law.

In the Legislative Assembly Edith Cowan successfully moved an amendment which made it a punishable offence to reveal a previous conviction before a State Children's Court. Nor could such a conviction be admitted in any court of law. As she told the Assembly "the idea of treating children on ordinary police lines has become obsolete, and we wish now to do as much as possible in the way of reform".⁷⁸ It appears that, even early in her parliamentary career, and on the backbench, Edith Cowan was able to "make a difference".

When the Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill came before the Assembly in late 1921, Edith Cowan had a motion placed on the Notice Paper that wives be regarded as household workers, be paid a wage, have set hours and be allowed to join unions. A frequent speaker on industrial arbitration matters, Edith Cowan had introduced this concept in the context of discussion about domestic work. She considered the legislation was too broad in scope but her proposal was regarded as too radical. One member predicted that "we shall have a revolution". She responded with the claim "I have heard it stated in this House that there are some things that can only be put right by a revolution".⁷⁹ Outside Parliament the topic provoked interest but unlike most other arbitration matters it was not revisited as a serious proposition in State Parliament.

The extent to which the various women's groups supported Edith Cowan's move for recognition of household work remains unclear. What is certain is the different stance adopted by the key women's organisations over the issue of compulsory notification of venereal disease. In 1916, Cowan had supported such legislation as necessary to stem the "VD" epidemic. She retained the support of the National Council of Women (NCW), but the Women's Service Guilds, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Children's Protection Society and the Labor Women's Organisation withdrew affiliation. The main basis for their action was the traditional feminist opposition to registration on the grounds that it would protect men at the expense of women's civil rights.⁸⁰

When the matter was raised in Parliament in 1922 it served to maintain the gulf between Edith Cowan and the NCW, and the Women's Service Guilds, whose chief spokesperson was the prominent Bessie

⁷⁵ WAPD, 11 October 1921, p. 1143.

⁷⁶ WAPD, 11 October 1921, p. 1146.

⁷⁷ WAPD, 11 October 1921, p. 1145.

⁷⁸ WAPD, 12 October 1921, p. 1184.

⁷⁹ WAPD, 25 November 1921, p. 1731

⁸⁰ Sawyer and Simms, *Ibid*, p. 86.

Rischbieth. This dispute was never healed. Probably with Rischbieth in mind, Cowan claimed "a great deal of nonsense has been talked on the issue from time to time..." Speaking to the Health Act Amendment Bill, she said "the whole community would be better if every of it could be examined from time to time". In her view "the idea that disease is a "crime" should be got rid of. Whether the disease is acquired innocently, or as a result of what is generally considered, and what I for my part consider, to be immoral conduct, the disease should be cured".⁸¹ As far as she could ascertain the legislation could not "be used wrongfully against women".

The women's and children's perspective adopted by Edith Cowan prompted her to speak at length about the "evils" of drinking and gambling. She participated extensively in debates on in the Licensing Act Amendment Bills in 1921 and 1922. Edith Cowan had been elected on a local option ticket but although she did not think this had been given a fair trial she was tempted to seek a Statewide referendum on prohibition "as the best means of settling the question". She was sufficiently practical to recognise that "straight out prohibition is an impossibility here at the present time, and that we have to go gradually, step by step, and the public must go with us".⁸²

According to Edith Cowan "the greater proportion of the people is affected as a consequence of drink than of anything else".⁸³ It was linked to "delirium tremens, misery, poverty, lunacy, sickness and the many other evils"⁸⁴ and there was evidence of hereditary conditions being passed on by drink". Ironically, despite her membership of a plethora of voluntary organisations, she did not join the Temperance League but she chided those bodies "for not doing what they should in the way of providing substitutes for liquor". Nevertheless she reached the conclusion "that to be called a wowser is something to be proud of".⁸⁵ Understandably she was vehemently opposed to lowering the drinking age below 21 years and the extension of trading hours, being totally opposed to sales on Sundays. She favoured the registration of bar attendants and criticised the Licensing Act Bills for not including the abolition of barmaids "as it is not a suitable employment for women".⁸⁶ She also regretted the legislation did not make the closure of wine shops compulsory.⁸⁷

Gambling, too, thought Edith Cowan, had a deleterious impact on individuals and society. In 1921, she tabled in the Legislative Assembly a resolution passed by the Child Welfare Committee (on which religious, educational, municipal and social bodies were represented) which condemned the Bill then before the Parliament to legalise lotteries for charitable purposes.⁸⁸ Taxation was the preferred method of providing money for these objects: "we ought not get down to such a low level that we take care of our own poor and our sick and our wounded soldiers, and our children...in the shape of gambling. I can not believe that the spirit of our humanity has fallen so low".⁸⁹

Wounded and returned soldiers, particularly in conjunction with the Red Cross Society, provided another focus for Edith Cowan's work. As Peter Cowan observed "her concern for the people involved, willingly or unwillingly, in war had been real and it was lasting".⁹⁰ This included working on a range of committees

⁸¹ WAPD, 5 January 1922, p. 2748.

⁸² WAPD, 13 December 1921, p. 2353.

⁸³ WAPD, 13 December 1921, p. 2354.

⁸⁴ WAPD, 5 September 1921, p. 563.

⁸⁵ WAPD, 5 September 1921, p.563.

⁸⁶ WAPD, 13 December 1921, p. 2354.

⁸⁷ WAPD, 5 September 1921, p. 564.

⁸⁸ WAPD, 28 September 1921, p. 1016.

⁸⁹ WAPD, 28 September 1921, p. 1016.

⁹⁰ Cowan, *Ibid*, p. 148.

to ease the burden of returned and injured servicemen. In Parliament, she spoke forcefully on the ANZAC Day Bill (1923) which was passed to strengthen (by way of restricting horse racing and the sale of liquor) the observance and sacred nature of the day which had been enshrined in the 1919 ANZAC Day Act. She told the Legislative Assembly.⁹¹

The only way to make them [the public] remember is to put something upon our statute book that will constitute an ideal for the future. I have always felt it to be a good thing if sometimes the statutes are a little ahead of the ideals of the people, because the law is there for them to live up to.

Edith Cowan also perceived the "state" as having a positive role to play in economic development. Progress in the State's north, including prospecting for oil and cotton growing, was sought. However, it was her endorsement of the south west region Group Settlement Scheme which attracted much of her parliamentary attention.⁹² It was considered that the package of taxation incentives would induce progress and create employment, although she did lament the Bill "does not go far enough".⁹³

Likewise Edith Cowan supported a role for government in the marketing of the wheat harvest. Nevertheless, in an insight to her interpretation of democratic theory, she contended "the wheat pool cannot be continued without the support of the people".⁹⁴ However, the expressed reason for her participation in the debate was to indicate to the members of the Country Party that there were more sides to the question than merely getting a good price for their wheat. In her opinion, no-one had acknowledged that the burden of widespread unemployment and poverty was being felt by the women and children of the community. Said Edith Cowan "We [women] have in a sense been kept far too long on mouldy corn, and not been considered in the way we should have been considered".⁹⁵

To the chagrin of the Country Party, Edith Cowan believed that the metropolitan area was under-represented in the Parliament. She was familiar with the notion of one vote, one value and she sought idealistically proportional representation and compulsory voting. Parliament under these proposals would mirror the electoral vote. Her election pamphlet had also contained a reference to a reduction in the number of parliamentary seats. In Parliament she said she would support moves in this direction but added "it is a waste of time to pursue such a course".⁹⁶ Indicative of her rejection of "partyism" she confessed when speaking of the sensitive matters of electoral reform that she had "not spoken to any member of the Government on the question...".⁹⁷ As usual Edith Cowan was her own person.

Parliamentary Questions and Notices of Motion

In her first session as an MP, Edith Cowan had 16 parliamentary questions recorded in her name (see Appendix 4). The total for the Legislative Assembly for the session was 233 questions on notice, with only two without notice. In that era, the latter implied a want of confidence in the Government or the Minister. They were rarely tabled. By comparison, in 1995, when Parliament was preparing for the 75th anniversary of Edith Cowan's election, the number of questions without notice in the Legislative Assembly was 701, with 4459 questions on notice.⁹⁸ Indicative of a change in her parliamentary tactics, Edith Cowan

⁹¹ WAPD, 21 November 1923, p. 1561.

⁹² WAPD, 8 December 1921, p. 2266.

⁹³ WAPD, 15 September 1921, p. 803.

⁹⁴ WAPD, 15 September 1921, p. 802.

⁹⁵ WAPD, 15 September 1921, p. 803.

⁹⁶ WAPD, 21 January 1923, p. 2870.

⁹⁷ WAPD, 21 January 1921, p. 2870.

⁹⁸ The Parliament of Western Australia, *Digest 1995-1996*, No 23 (forthcoming)

generated only five recorded questions with notice in 1922 and in her final year the number was reduced to two such questions. By then she was giving more emphasis to legislative measures.

An examination of Edith Cowan's question schedule reveals some of her priorities and concerns. She used the procedure to seek rulings on the privileges of women in Parliament, obtain details about hospitals and maternity care, raise concerns about gambling and lotteries, focus on economic development in rural areas and represent constituency grievances such as sewage and water supply, and railway crossing safety. Compulsory voting, as usual, was promoted given that it was the subject of a successful private member's Bill in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1924. Edith Cowan also queried whether favours were implicit in the allocation of holiday bungalows at Rottnest Island.⁹⁹

After some six weeks of sitting in Parliament, Edith Cowan gave notice of a question to the Speaker (George Taylor) as to whether the privilege of admission of strangers to the Speaker's Gallery should be extended to women as well as men. The Speaker responded with the observation that tradition restricted the privilege to men.¹⁰⁰ This prompted Edith Cowan to move a motion a week later "that in the opinion of the House the privilege of admission to the Speaker's gallery should be extended to women as well as men".¹⁰¹

The debate was soon extended to consideration of the public gallery, where a women's, men's and general area had been designated. An amendment by Peter O'Loghlen (Forrest) then sought to insert the words "and all other galleries" after the word "gallery". The motion was accepted.¹⁰² Edith Cowan's presence had required consideration of an issue that had never previously been given thought. However, no other significant changes to Parliamentary operations can be directly attributed to Edith Cowan.

Budget Estimates-Annual Votes

The annual parliamentary scrutiny of budget estimates provided scope for Edith Cowan, as well as other Members, to endorse or criticise government policy (see Appendix 5). Accountability for government expenditures was invariably sought. On some items, Edith Cowan reiterated opinions she had articulated elsewhere in Parliament. Encompassed in this category were railway costs, road conditions (including consideration of animal welfare), road and railway safety, adequate housing and care for children and adults, particularly those with intellectual disabilities. In an attempt to resolve some of her concerns about metropolitan water supply (and sewage), particularly for her West Perth residents, Edith Cowan called for an inquiry after arguing for the creation of a separate country and metropolitan water supply board.¹⁰³ Later she contended that public utility services could be more effectively delivered by trusts or boards rather than by government departments.¹⁰⁴ In this sense Edith Cowan was heralding the subsequent emergence of statutory authorities for the provision of some major government services.

In some instances, however, Edith Cowan raised topics which had not previously surfaced in Parliament. On one occasion, when the Education vote was being discussed, Edith Cowan presented her case for domestic science training. She asserted "nothing is more important to the community than the proper training of girls and women in domestic science and household management".¹⁰⁵ Given that education, and particularly for women, had to be fought for, it is surprising she did not argue in Parliament for a

⁹⁹ WAPD, 25 August 1921, p. 423.

¹⁰⁰ WAPD, 20 September 1921, p. 821.

¹⁰¹ WAPD, 28 September 1921, p. 1000.

¹⁰² WAPD, 28 September 1921, p. 1009.

¹⁰³ WAPD, 30 November 1921, pp. 2015-2016.

¹⁰⁴ WAPD, 13 December 1922, p. 2202.

¹⁰⁵ WAPD, 26 October 1921, p. 1492.

broader range of subjects. It is known she preferred the modern curriculum to the scriptures and ancient classical studies that had dominated in her youth.¹⁰⁶

A commitment to education was a tenet of Edith Cowan's philosophy. She strongly supported a motion to annul a University of Western Australia Statute which was designed to permit the University to establish fees and bursaries for attendance of students at lectures and classes. When a member observed that Edith Cowan had not received a university education she replied:¹⁰⁷

'No more is the pity'. I think perhaps we all feel it is a pity we were not able to attend a university, that had it been free in our day it would have made a great difference to our culture generally and perhaps to the whole community ...I do not think we have given the system of free education a fair trial, because we have not provided the money necessary to its proper development.

Then, displaying her occasional capacity to annoy some of her parliamentary colleagues, Edith Cowan reminded them how "on a practically unanimous vote it was decided to provide an additional 8,000 [pound] per annum for increases in members' salaries. If we can do that, we ought to be able to fund the small amount extra required by the University".¹⁰⁸ In one of her earlier speeches Edith Cowan had employed similar reasoning when she said "if we can afford enormous amounts yearly in drink, and only a moderate amount on education, there is something wrong with our point of view, and we are not particularly balanced people as to what is best for the community".¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless this quest for a balanced outlook once prompted Edith Cowan to remind Members that "before we come to the question of education we must consider whether a child is in a fit state of health to receive an education".¹¹⁰

On several occasions Edith Cowan used the Estimates to raise matters of alleged maladministration or injustice. In her judgement some of these problems could be overcome with better representation of women in administration. When discussing the case of a woman being detained in an asylum for longer than necessary, she added "I deprecate strongly the fact that no woman has been appointed to a position on the royal commission to investigate lunacy matters here".¹¹¹ In another instance, Edith Cowan aired concerns about an internal inquiry within the Railways Department which had exonerated a man of charges of misconduct.¹¹²

The high masculinity ratio, particularly in rural areas, gained Edith Cowan's attention. When examining the Estimates of the Colonial Secretary's Department, she cited correspondence suggesting a Government matrimonial bureau.¹¹³ A farmer requiring a wife could deposit five pounds so that all applications would be genuine, with the deposit refunded on the presentation of marriage lines. This did not come to fruition although it does raise the need for further research on Edith Cowan's views on the institution of marriage. Archival records reveal that her marriage certificate was an unusually detailed document.¹¹⁴ Edith Cowan's biographer also made an observation that in later life she reflected upon

¹⁰⁶ Cowan, *Ibid*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁷ WAPD, 22 December 1921, p. 2599.

¹⁰⁸ WAPD, 22 December 1921, p. 2599.

¹⁰⁹ WAPD, 13 December 1921, p. 2354.

¹¹⁰ WAPD, 24 November 1921, p. 1921.

¹¹¹ WAPD, 24 November 1921, p. 1920.

¹¹² WAPD, 9 January 1923, p. 2465.

¹¹³ WAPD, 30 October 1923, p. 1217.

¹¹⁴ Battye Library: Perth, Western Australia, Settlement on Marriage (James Cowan and Edith Dircksey Brown) 11 November 1879.

whether she should have married and had a family.¹¹⁵ An admission was made that Edith Cowan "was a difficult personality", but this was rationalised with the claim that some of her attributes "great courage, outspokenness, a remarkably clear and logical mind-were public rather than private virtues".¹¹⁶ Edith Cowan, as a woman, was forging a new path in public life. Undoubtedly she would not have had the necessary assistance to fulfil such a pioneering role. At least after the 1924 election parliamentary duties were not required to exacerbate the role conflict.

Electoral Defeat

Two main factors in 1924 made Edith Cowan's task of achieving re-election very difficult. In the first place, Labor decided to contest the seat. Although its candidate, Alexander McDougall, did not expect to win, his party targeted the women's vote and campaigned strongly against Edith Cowan because she had failed to vote on a Labor motion to equalise the leave privileges of the wages and salaries staff of the railways. Edith Cowan's explanation was that she had been temporarily absent at the time of the vote because of an important meeting at the Maimed and Limbless Association. As the division was lost on the Speaker's casting vote the inability of Edith Cowan to record her vote drew public criticism. Although Edith Cowan had sometimes voted with Labor on social matters it was not with sufficient frequency to satisfy the party hierarchy. Secondly, the Nationalist Party devoted most of its resources to the election of Thomas Davy who shared endorsement with Edith Cowan. Davy had been specifically sought to win West Perth: as a Rhodes Scholar from Hale School and a legal practitioner, he was regarded as an outstanding candidate.

Just prior to the 1924 poll Edith Cowan's campaign committee placed a large advertisement in the *Daily News* tabulating more than twenty community posts and organisations that she had continued to serve during her parliamentary term.¹¹⁷ However, Edith Cowan was eliminated on the first count after her first preference vote had dropped from the 1921 reading of 38.29 per to 30.85 per cent (see Appendix 7). The extent to which she suffered from a fall in turn-out of nearly five percent is uncertain but it was a reminder of Edith Cowan's unsuccessful quest for the enactment of compulsory voting. Nevertheless the electoral loss of the first women parliamentarian in Australia was not given major headlines although the *Sunday Times* had a sub-heading titled "Mrs Cowan Retires".¹¹⁸ The *West Australian* in its brief analysis observed that "in spite of a preponderance of female voters [in West Perth] Edith Cowan failed to retain her seat".¹¹⁹

Edith Cowan's Contribution

To win a parliamentary seat in 1921 on the basis of her own credentials, rather than those of her husband (as was the case with several pioneer women parliamentarians), was a remarkable achievement. It was a win "against the odds", although this is a phrase which Edith Cowan would not have approved because of its gambling implications. However, it demonstrated that membership of a plethora of community groups was an enabling factor for electoral success.

By most measures Edith Cowan was an extremely active parliamentarian (see also Appendix 6). Her age did not appear to be an impediment to her performance although she had been forced on health grounds to request three weeks leave of absence during her second year as the Member for West Perth.¹²⁰ Her role was based on close constituency links. Of course Edith Cowan fervently represented the women's perspective on the basis of a partnership with men rather than in antagonistic opposition to them. In this context she also gave strong representation to children's rights, particularly in the court system and with health matters. In Parliament she began the process of breaking down some of the privileges restricted

¹¹⁵ Cowan, *Ibid*, p. 279.

¹¹⁶ Cowan, *Ibid*, p. 279.

¹¹⁷ *Daily News*, 22 March 1924, p.7.

¹¹⁸ *Sunday Times*, 23 March 1924, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *West Australian*, 24 March 1924, p.7.

¹²⁰ WAPD, 18 October 1922, p. 1101.

to men. Indeed, she could not comprehend a rationale for, or accept, any discrimination on the basis of gender.

Education was an avenue for hope. This had been exhibited more by Edith Cowan in her community life than in Parliament. Nevertheless in the Legislative Assembly she argued that "free" university courses could uplift the cultural standards of society. In the Budget Estimates she sought more funds for education although this was tempered by good health being regarded as a pre-requisite for effective education of the child. Edith Cowan reiterated her thoughts about the necessity of a domestic science curriculum for girls. She spoke at length on behalf of the Australian Trained Nurses Association and the Returned Army Nurses in their successful quest to secure the passage of the 1921 Nurses' Registration Bill. As nursing was an occupation almost entirely restricted to women the enhancement of educational standards in this profession contributed to the elevation of woman in the work force.

The Women's Legal Status Act opened the legal and other professions to women. It was a measure of symbolic and practical significance. Her pragmatism persuaded her to accept an amendment to delete marriage as a barrier to women's entry to a profession. To steadfastly insist on the integrity of the original Bill would have threatened its passage. She also steered through the Parliament another private member's Bill which gave equal inheritance rights to mothers where a child died intestate and without issue. However, given the rarity of such Bills, being successful with such limited parliamentary experience was a significant achievement.

In deliberations on the wages system Edith Cowan argued for a "social wage" before that concept had been introduced. Intellectually and pragmatically, she sought a balance between private and public enterprise. She strongly defended what were then called a "civil" (public) servants (of which her husband was one), but believed that private enterprise was generally more efficient. Nevertheless, she thought the "state" had an obligation to promote regional development, often with the tool of taxation incentives and through the provision of infrastructure such as schools, infant health centres, hospitals and roads. In rural areas Edith Cowan had argued that road transport was normally more cost effective than railway lines. This was a controversial stance but she maintained an awareness of both metropolitan and rural outlooks.

Edith Cowan admitted that her views on gambling, alcoholism and censorship stamped her as "a wowser". Perhaps due to the divisions in the women's movement it was not an arena in which she concentrated her amazing range of voluntary committee work. In fact she attacked the ineffectual strategies of the Temperance League. She had learnt about the costs of alcoholism in her youth so the depths of her opinions could be understood. Given the tragedies experienced by both of her parents, she provided a model for both men and women in overcoming adversity and making a contribution to civic life.

At the end of her first session of Parliament Edith Cowan thanked the members for their indulgence concerning her presence.¹²¹ Nevertheless, near the conclusion of her short parliamentary career, she was forced to complain about the lack of courtesy that some members had exhibited towards her in debates. One Labor member, William Angwin (North-East Fremantle), in particular, constantly interjected when she spoke.¹²² As no special favours were given to her, she was sometimes prepared to retaliate with interjections.

Significantly, though, the experienced and influential Philip Collier made the judgement that the eleventh parliament had a very good tone and was one of the most constructive.¹²³ Earlier Collier had reminded the Speaker "you have been privileged to preside over a Chamber which, for the first time in its history, has had in its midst a mother of the House".¹²⁴ Members had become aware of how she displayed no inclination to "toe the party line". Moreover, she did not have a fixed "left" or "right" ideological perspective. Given her preparedness to use the range of parliamentary procedures to express her views, together with

¹²¹ WAPD, 22 December 1921, p. 2618.

¹²² WAPD, 30 October 1923, p. 1219.

¹²³ WAPD, 13 December 1932, p. 2105.

¹²⁴ WAPD, 22 December 1921, p. 2617.

her general persistence, it is surprising she did not give consideration to reviving the old procedure of tabling petitions from electors: in the post-World War 1 parliaments, very few were recorded.

One parliamentary procedure which Edith Cowan did employ was the tabling of Notices of Motion. Although this tactic was sparingly used, particularly on matters of justice and principle, Edith Cowan was successful in eliminating the tradition of the Speaker's Gallery (and other parliamentary galleries) being reserved for men. Given her sound knowledge of the thoughts of prominent British critics of the Westminster parliamentary system, such as J.S. Mill and John Bright, Edith Cowan was also able to consider key reforms to the cabinet and electoral system. As the supremacy of Parliament, probity in public life and accountability of government expenditures, were three of her themes she foreshadowed some of the issues which were not taken seriously until the revelations of the 1992 *Western Australian Royal Commission into the Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters*.

Parliament, thought Edith Cowan, enabled members to learn "to be balanced"¹²⁵ in their views. The parliamentary processes also made members conscious of the difficulties encountered to convince colleagues of the merits of policies. She appealed to community leaders to stand for Parliament rather than keep in the background "and pull strings".¹²⁶ Certainly one of her legacies was a preparedness to delve into matters not adequately addressed by the Government or Opposition in the Western Australian Parliament. It could be asserted that Dr Elizabeth Constable (Floreat) has filled this vacuum (with Phil Pandal, South Perth) in the contemporary Parliament. Dr Constable, with the advantage of a university education, has exhibited a more predictable approach than Edith Cowan to her parliamentary speeches. Moreover, the former is more engaging in her political style. Nevertheless, it is the value of an independent voice which has appeal in some quarters.

Whether Edith Cowan's own anti-partyism was the best way of serving the cause of women parliamentarians is another question. David Black, an authority on this era of State politics, has cited an opinion that she was "unreliable" in her voting record.¹²⁷ A careful analysis of Edith Cowan's record has indicated that she did vote with the Opposition (Labor) on a number of occasions. However, as Choules has indicated "it is misleading to suggest that she was something of a renegade in parliament when her actions are viewed in context with the voting record of her Nationalist colleagues".¹²⁸ Generally, though, the "unreliable" tag has been interpreted as one reason why the Nationalist Party decided to mobilise the bulk of its resources behind Thomas Davy, who defeated her in 1924 and 1927 (see Appendix 7). These defeats dealt a blow to those who had believed Edith Cowan could open the way for more women parliamentarians. Perhaps, though, as with her equal opportunity philosophy, she was ahead of her time. Her experiences had made it clear that Parliament needed to modify its procedures for women. Nevertheless, an electoral strategy based on seeking to capture women's votes was fraught with difficulties, particularly when major women's organisations were divided on several policy issues.

In 1921, four women (three of them Independents) contested the State election. Three years later, apart from Edith Cowan, there were only two woman candidates. In 1927, with the nomination statistics again distorted by the high number of unopposed elections in "safe" seats, only three women stood for election. In a 1925 by-election, May Holman succeeded her father J.B. Holman in the seat of Forrest. Holman had the dual distinction of being the first woman to represent the Labor Party and the first woman in the British Commonwealth to be re-elected, holding the seat until her death in 1939. Meanwhile, in 1936, Florence Cardell Oliver was elected for the seat of Subiaco and later became the State's first woman cabinet minister.

Apart from the meagre number of women who won seats, only a handful of women gained party nomination. Up to and including the 1947 Legislative Assembly general elections, women candidates

¹²⁵ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 187.

¹²⁶ WAPD, 9 August 1923, p. 186.

¹²⁷ Black, David (1991), "Factionalism and Stability, 1911-1947", in David Black (ed), *The House on the Hill: A History of the Parliament of Western Australia*, Perth: Parliamentary History Project, p. 125.

¹²⁸ Choules, *Ibid*, pp.112-113.

contested only 25 of a possible 450 seats. In the Legislative Council, there were only three women candidates for the 120 seats. As late as 1940 there had been only 10 women who had stood for the Legislative Assembly and the only woman nominating for a Legislative Council election was the wife of a deceased member.¹²⁹ Without doubt these statistics would have deeply disappointed Edith Cowan. Even today (in 1996) only 12 of the 57 member Legislative Assembly are women, with the Deputy Premier Hendy Cowan having the distinction of being a distant relative. Of the 34 members of the Legislative Council only five are women: an even lower percentage than the lower house. What, though, is the critical mass required to replicate a recent Westminster study on women politicians transforming the Parliament?¹³⁰

In 1921 Edith Cowan had overcome the obstacles to be elected in the previously all-male chamber. Interestingly in 1923, during an exchange in Parliament when she was being critical of the "spirit" being exhibited by some male MPs, referred to the formation of a women's party:¹³¹

There are many of us who still do not wish to bring that about, but it may ultimately be necessary to have such a party to look after the interests of women. The effect of forming one would possibly be much stronger than some men realise. Women wish to work with men not against them, and we therefore desire that the men should work with us and not against us when it comes to the question of employment of women in positions in which they can obtain a satisfactory livelihood.

Edith Cowan had made this claim before she nominated on behalf of the Women's Electoral League in 1927. The League was not a fully fledged political party but the outcome on that occasion meant that the prospects for a women's party were not promising. Today, the formation of a political party still has currency but it is not the desired path of most women. How to secure greater representation of women in Parliament is still a matter for concern. Should quotas be imposed in "safe" seats or should evolution take its course?

As demonstrated in her comments on the 1923 ANZAC Day Act Edith Cowan thought that legislation could often incorporate community ideals, even if the statutes were ahead of the practices of the people. However, after the passage of the Women's Legal Status Act in 1923 it was over sixty years before the Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act (1984) was passed providing remedies in respect of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, race, political conviction, or involving sexual harassment. Such legislation does prompt analysis about whether such objectives are achieved. Unfortunately, though, there are indications that legislation can be slow to change the habits of the community.

One of the last major projects in which Edith Cowan was engaged was the 1929 Western Australian Centenary. At that stage she would have been disappointed to observe how few women were prominent in parliamentary and public life. As we celebrate the 75th anniversary of Edith Cowan's election, more women are gaining public office. Will the situation change rapidly by the occasion of Australia's century of Federation? Edith Cowan had reservations about Federation but if it could be celebrated with more women in Parliament and public life she would believe we are creating a better partnership for the future. It, too, in her view would enhance the legitimacy and authority of the Parliament as it would be representing an ever broader spectrum of the society.

¹²⁹ Black, *Ibid*, p. 124.

¹³⁰ Norris, Pippa (1996), "Women Politicians: Transforming Westminster"? *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 1, January, pp 89-102.

¹³¹ WAPD, 9 January 1923, p. 2466.

APPENDIX 1

Edith Cowan's Membership of Voluntary Organisations and Advisory Bodies

Anglican Social Questions Committee (Vice Chairman)
Anglican Synod (Co-opted member, 1921-1931)
Children's Protection Society (Life member)
Country Women's Association (Founding member, 1923)
Co-Freemasonry Committee
District Nurse Society-Cottesloe (President)
Girls' Friendly Society (Associate Member)
Girl Guides Association (Foundation Member)
Greater Perth Red Cross Appeal Committee
House of Mercy (Alexander Home/Ngala)
Housewives League (Vice President)
Hospital Advisory Board (Secretary, 1916)
Immigration Council (Women's Auxiliary)
Infant Welfare Association (Vice-President)
King Edward Memorial Maternity Hospital (Advisory Board)
Karrakatta Women's Club (1894, President 1910-12, Life Member 1919)
Maimed and Limbless Soldiers Appeal (Women's Auxiliary President)
Military Nurses Rest Home Committee (President)
Ministering Children's League (President)
Mother's Union (Member)
National Council for the Advancement of Women (President, WA Branch, 1913-1921)
North Fremantle Board of Education
Nurses Registration Board
Order of International Co-Freemasonry (1916-1928)
Perth Hospital Board and Finance Committee
Red Cross (Foundation member-various committees)
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (15 years)
Sex Education in Schools Committee
Soldiers Memorial Committee (National Council of Women Representative)
Soldier Welcoming Committee (Chairperson)
Soldiers Welfare Committee (President, Ladies General Committee)
St George's Reading Society
St Mary's School (Governor)
Town Planning Association
Venereal Diseases Council
Western Australian League of Nations Board
Western Australian Historical Society (Founding Member, 1926)
Western Australian 1929 Centenary Celebration

- Executive 1927
- Chairman of the Historical Arts and Science and Pageantry Group Committee
- Convenor of the Committee for the Old Time Ball.

Western Australian Industrial League (Women's Executive)
Western Australian Women's Justice Association (Vice-President)
Western Australian Products' Board
Women's Citizen League (President)
Women's Electoral League
Women's Service Guild (Foundation Member, 1906)
Young Women's Christian Association

APPENDIX 2

Mrs James Cowan Election Pamphlet-1921 Election

(See Cowan, 1978, p. 163).

Mrs James Cowan, National Candidate Will Support:

1. Law and order and the maintenance of Constitutional Government.
2. That parliamentary representatives shall be responsible only to their own constituents.
3. Assistance to industries by encouragement and help to primary producers, and, above all, to Secondary Industries which must be fostered if the country is to prosper.
4. Reduction in the cost of living by the establishment of markets on the lines of those in Melbourne and elsewhere.
5. Protection of Child Life by the Endowment of Motherhood, the establishment of creches, playgrounds and national kitchens in every suburb.
6. Preference to Returned soldiers.
7. Compulsory voting with proportional representation.
8. Good water supply from the hills.
10. Reduction in the Members of Parliament, and no further increases in salaries.
11. Efficiency and Economy in the Civil Service, and that Civil Servants should again be asked to suggest better methods of saving and organisation. These suggestions to be considered by an outside board of business men, thus preventing them from any possibility of being pigeon-holed by Ministers and Heads of Departments.
12. Properly supervised and controlled Immigration.
13. Local Option to be applied to all licences.
14. Equal pay for equal work, with a preferential rate for married men.
15. State Insurance against sickness and unemployment.
16. Proper treatment for Homes for Mental Defectives.
17. Increased Maternity and General Hospital accommodation.
18. An efficient milk supply.
19. Town Planning Bill.

APPENDIX 3

Mrs James Cowan Election Pamphlet-1924

(See Cowan, 1978, p.230).

Mrs James Cowan National Candidate Will Support:

1. That Parliamentary Representatives shall be responsible only to their own Constituents.
2. Assistance to Industries by encouragement and help to primary producers, especially to Secondary Industries, which must be fostered if we desire to employ our own people.
3. Preference in employment to Returned Soldiers.
4. Compulsory training of girls in domestic science in all schools.
5. Compulsory Voting with Proportional Representation.
6. Efficiency and Economy in the Civil Service and that Civil Servants themselves be invited to suggest better methods of saving and organisation, these to be considered by an outside board of business men, who will recommend or otherwise to the Government, thus ensuring that they will not be pigeon-holed by Ministers and heads of Departments.
7. Present Policy of Immigration.
8. Local Option to be applied to all Licences.
9. Equal pay for equal work for women and men.
10. State Insurance against Sickness and Employment.
11. Proper treatment and homes for Mental Defectives, and special schools for backward children.
12. Increased maternity and General Hospital accommodation for all, and the passing of a proper Hospitals Bill to this end.
13. Town Planning Bill
14. A Fair Rents Bill on lines that really benefit the people.
15. Power to tax on unimproved land values being given to Municipalities.
16. More Baby Health Centres and also Officers for Medical and Dental Inspection in our State Schools.
17. Provision for Proper Superannuation Fund for the Police and Civil Service.

APPENDIX 4

Parliamentary Questions and Notices of Motion

State Children and Charities	2 August 1921.
Stock at Northern Ports	11 August 1921.
Esperance Railway and Jetty	11 August 1921.
Rottneest Island, Accommodation	25 August 1921.
Speakers's Gallery: Privileges of Women	20 September 1921.
Hospital for the Insane (Accommodation for Patients)	21 September 1921.
Hospital for the Insane (The Hospital Dairy)	21 September 1921.
State Children Departments	21 September 1921.
Hotel Metropole, Sewage,	27 September 1921.
King Edward Hospital, Employee	27 September 1921.
Esplanade Fair Grounds,	27 September 1921.
Hospital for the Insane, Royal Commission	4 October 1921.
Oil Prospecting Areas	19 October 1921.
Avon Valley Lands Unused	19 October 1921.
Hospital for the Insane, Royal Commission	30 November 1921.
Juvenile Gambling	7 December 1921.
Lotteries and Sweeps	9 August 1922.
Sewerage, West Perth	9 August 1922.
Forests Commission	9 August 1922.
Railways, Overhead Bridge, Melbourne Road	13 September 1922.
Forests Commission Report	5 October 1922.
Wheat for Home Gristing	7 December 1922.
Electoral, Compulsory Voting	9 January 1923.
Group Settlement	20 September 1923.
Medical Care and Maternity Cases	7 December 1923.
Notice of Motion: Cost of Railway Construction in the State	21 September 1921.
Notice of Motion Speaker's Gallery Privileges to Women	28 September 1921.
Notice of Motion: Soldier Settlement,	
Pyrton and Hearne Hill Estates (Debate Participation)	12 October 1921.
Notice of Motion: University, Fees and Bursaries(Debate Participation)	12 December 1921.
Notice of Motion: Retirement of A.C. Kessell (Debate Participation)	15 December 1921.
Notice of Motion: Pension Rights of J. B. Connolly (Debate Participation)	3 October 1923.
Complimentary Remarks: Christmas Adjournment (Debate Participation)	22 December 1921.

APPENDIX 5

Annual Budget Estimates: Edith Cowan Debate Participation

Council of Industrial Development and Tourists' and Publicists Bureau	20 October 1921
Worker's Homes Board	25 October 1921
Education	26 October 1921
Medical and Public Health	26 October 1921
Public Works and Buildings	15 November 1921
Harbour and Lights and Jetties	24 November 1921
Lunacy and Inebriates,	24 November 1921
State Children and Outdoor Relief	24 November 1921
Public Utilities, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewage and Drainage	30 November 1921
Railways	1 December 1921
Public Utilities, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewage and Drainage	13 December 1922
Railways and Tramways and Electricity Supplies	9 January 1923
Lands and Surveys	18 September 1923
Government Savings Bank	25 September 1923
Infant Health Association, Child Clinic	27 September 1923
Public Works and Buildings	27 September 1923
Police	16 October 1923
Office of Colonial Secretary	30 October 1923
Railways	8 November 1923
State Hotels	20 November 1923
Railways and Tramways	27 November 1923

APPENDIX 6

Parliamentary Participation (Address-in-Reply and Legislation)

Address-in Reply

Address-in-Reply	21 July 1921
Address-in-Reply	9 August 1922
Address-in-Reply	9 August 1923

Private Member's Bills

Administration Act Amendment Bill, 7 September 1922 (Private Member's Bill)
Women's Legal Status Bill, 5 September 1923 (Private Member's Bill)

Parliamentary Bills (Alphabetical Order-Date of first Participation)

Anzac Day Bill	21 November 1922
Closer Settlement Bill	8 December 1921
Closer Settlement Bill (No.2)	13 September 1922
Courts of Session Bill	6 December 1921
Criminal Code Amendment Bill	28 September 1921
Electoral Districts Bill	25 January 1923
Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill	11 October 1921
Health Act Amendment Bill	5 January 1922
Hospitals Bill	5 December 1922
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill	16 November 1921
Inspection of Machinery Bill	14 September 1921
Licensing Act Amendment Bill	13 December 1921
Licensing Act Amendment Bill	5 September 1922
Nurses Registration Bill	12 November 1922
Pensioner's Rate (Rates Exemption Bill)	22 September 1922
Perpetual Executors, Trustees and Agency Co Bill	18 January 1923
Public Works Committee Bill	20 November 1921
Redistribution of Seats Bill	20 September 1923
State Children's Act Amendment Bill	12 October 1921
Western Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Co. Ltd. Act (Private) Bill	6 December 1923
Wheat Marketing Bill	15 September 1921

APPENDIX 7

Edith Cowan's Electoral Record for the Seat of West Perth*

1921 (11th Parliament, 12 March 1921)				
<i>Enrolment</i>	<i>Total Votes (%)</i>	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>1st Count (%)</i>	<i>Fin. Count (%)</i>
4453	3085 (69.28)	ALLEN, Ebenezer COWAN, Edith DRAPER, Thomas Informal	767 (25.23) 1164 (38.29) 1109 (36.48) 3040 45 (1.46)	1543 (50.76) 1497 (49.24)
(Allen-Nationalist, previously Ministerialist; Cowan-Nationalist; Draper-Nationalist)				
1924 (12th Parliament, 22 March 1924)				
<i>Enrolment</i>	<i>Total Votes (%)</i>	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>1st Count (%)</i>	<i>Fin. Count (%)</i>
5591	3621 (64.77)	COWAN, Edith DAVY, Thomas McDOUGALL, Alex Total Informal	1108 (30.85) 1250 (34.81) 1233 (34.34) 3591 30 (0.83)	2182 (60.96) 1409 (39.24)
(Cowan-Nationalist; Davy-Nationalist; McDougall-Australian Labor Party)				
1927 (12th Parliament, 26 March 1927)				
<i>Enrolment</i>	<i>Total Votes (%)</i>	<i>Candidates</i>	<i>1st Count (%)</i>	<i>Fin. Count (%)</i>
5348	4075 (76.20)	COWAN, Edith DAVY, Thomas McDOUGALL, Alex Total Informal	803 (20.21) 1766 (44.44) 1405 (35.35) 3974 101 (2.48)	2400 (60.39) 1574 (39.61)
(Cowan-Women's Electoral League; Davy-United Party; McDougall-Australian Labor Party)				

* Source: Black, David (1996), *Legislative Assembly of Western Australia: Election Statistics, 1890-1996*, Perth: Parliamentary History Project (forthcoming).

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EDITH COWAN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

Address-in-Reply Speeches

MAIDEN SPEECH ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Legislative Assembly, 21 July 1921

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Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.0]: I move —

That the following address be represented to His Excellency in reply to the Speech he has been pleased to deliver to us:—

"May it please Your Excellency. We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of the State of Western Australia in Parliament assembled, beg to express our loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign and to thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have been pleased to deliver to Parliament."

I have much pleasure in submitting this motion. I stand here today in the unique position of being the first woman in an Australian Parliament. I know many people think perhaps that it was not the wisest thing to do to send a woman into Parliament, and perhaps I should remind Hon. members that one of the reasons why women and men also considered it advisable to do so, was because it was felt that men need a reminder sometimes from women beside them that will make them realise all that can be done for the race and for the home. I have been sent here more from that standpoint than from any other. You Mr Speaker, are aware that everybody said when the elections began that there were three old women putting up for Parliament. I am the only old woman who got in, but then I am the only genuine one of the lot.

Hon. W C Angwin: There was a nice young woman defeated at Claremont.

Mrs COWAN: I am very sorry she did not get in.

Hon. P Collier: We are all very sorry.

Mrs COWAN: I only desire to say that I am here ready to help hon. members to these ends. That is all I came here for, and it is also my desire to seek the help of hon. members, because that will be most necessary if woman's opinion is to have any effect in this Parliament. It is a great responsibility to be the only woman here, and I want to emphasise the necessity which exists for other women being here. It will be remembered that one of the things that made men, as well as the women, realise the need for having women in Parliament was that a Parliament like this, consisting entirely of men, was able, clearly without thinking what it was doing, to pass an amendment to an Act no so long ago—the State Children Act—by which any child that was convicted before a State Children's Court would be a State child until it reached the age of 18. When we found that out we felt that it was more than time that someone should come into this House just to remind the men sometimes that these questions should be given more consideration. There are many other things that will crop up during the session in connection with which I feel sure I shall be able to give some help, and I feel certain also that hon. members will be only too pleased to give me their help, and I feel certain also that hon. members will be only too pleased to give me their help—for I will need it—whenever they have to be reminded of these necessary things that I shall probably have the honour of submitting to them, and in connection with which I shall have to seek their assistance, if the outcome is to be successful. Then, again, the Scriptures tell us that it is not good for man to be alone. I appreciate the honour that was conferred on my in asking me, though not the youngest member in this House, to move the Address-in-reply. I look on it as an honour conferred on the women of the country, and I therefore thank the Government for it.

Hon. W C Angwin: They only wanted your vote.

Mrs COWAN: It is all the more necessary, therefore, that I should make it clear where I stand. I am a Nationalist, and I belong to no party in this House. I was sent here to uphold law and order and constitutional government and it will be my desire to assist in carrying out these objects in a proper and satisfactory manner; while in the discharge of my duties here I shall be responsible only to my own constituents. That plank was inserted when the fighting platform of the Nationalists was drawn up, and I think the Premier will grant me that he himself was one who helped to draw up that platform. There are too many here today who are possessed of the old party spirit, which seems ever to exist, but I cannot see why we should drag party into things that concern the whole of the State. We want every member in this House to realise the mistakes of the past in this direction. I think, too, it has been fairly proved in this House today that women can and do stand by women, and will stand by women in the future if it is only to help to get rid of some of that painful party spirit so frequently evinced on questions on which it should never be brought to bear. I must also add that, while a Nationalist, and while supporting a Nationalist Government, I shall always reserve to myself the right to criticise suggestively and candidly any legislation brought forward, and will do everything in my power to remedy any mistakes which may seem to me are being made. With regard to the deficit, I do not propose to deal very much with it today, as an opportunity will arise later. We all regret that the country is obliged to have a deficit. I suppose no country can live without more or less of an overdraft. We certainly have a large one, and it will be a bad day for us if it should be suddenly called up from Europe or anywhere else. Therefore it is a good thing to see that the Government have been putting their house in order. With regard to the Arbitration Court, which has not helped solve existing difficulties, I would like to make the suggestion that a trained economist or commercial man, and a Labour man should be appointed to investigate each year the existing economic conditions, get a knowledge of work to be undertaken, and then set wages in any calling. This would help any Government.

Member: Where would you get an economist?

Mrs COWAN: What do we have professors of economics for in the universities, if they are not to be utilised in such a direction? Reverting again to the deficit, I am glad to say that it has not been appreciably added to by the advent of a woman to Parliament. I was told that the election of a woman would involve an expenditure during the present session of £300 or £400, owing to the necessity for making alterations to a portion of the building; but none were made, and I might add, owing to my moderation and the care of the Speaker, such an expenditure has not been incurred. As a matter of fact, the cost to the country has been about £20, and the deficit will not be added to, to any extent worth talking about.

Mr Lambert: Will you invite us to see how the money was spent?

Mrs COWAN: With regard to the water supply for the metropolitan area, that is a matter that concerns every household, and is satisfactory to see that the Government are attending to it. There is a reference to the matter in the Speech, and it is to the effect that the question is receiving consideration. I trust it will be possible to have a board appointed at no distant date to deal with it. It is most necessary that we should have some outside authority appointed and something done in a more practical way towards improving the existing condition of affairs. It has been brought under my notice that there is another scheme on the tapis and it is one which might receive early consideration. I am not aware that the Premier even knows the details of it, but it is a scheme that was submitted some years ago by Mr Shields who is an engineer possessing qualifications in advance of those held by any officer in the Government departments. I contend that that gentleman's scheme is worthy of serious consideration, and I hope the Government will give it that consideration, even if they have to do so by appointing an outside board in order that a fair decision might be arrived at as to the merits of that and the other schemes. It is a proposal, too, which I understand will cost a third of the others which have been propounded and therefore, in the interests of the ratepayers, and particularly the women who have to use water for cooking, washing and other domestic purposes, something should be done to ensure the cheapest supply. A suggestion has also been made to the Government that the temporary supply might be increased from the lakes around Perth. That too is worthy of serious consideration on behalf of the ratepayers. If hon. members lived in West Perth they would know what the people there had to suffer last summer; and we pay highly for it. Therefore we are all gratified to learn that the question is at last going to be dealt with and, it is to be hoped, in a satisfactory way. With regard to education, naturally one will support all that makes for efficiency and that which will help the children of parents who are in the country. We have far too many families in our towns, and we require to give people every opportunity for realising and enjoying the beauties of country life without the loss of this advantage. I judge by the report which has been handed in, from the little one has seen of it, that possibly more may be done in that direction and done better than has been the case in the past. I honestly hope so, because it does seem to be an anomaly that we should be able to spend £1,400 on a gymnasium in the city while some of our teachers outback are living in canvas bedrooms containing at one end the season's supply of bonedust. I wish to specially draw the attention of the Minister for Education to such anomalies.

The Premier: The Minister for Agriculture?

Mrs COWAN: Perhaps both of them. It should be possible to have that condition of things altered, for how can we expect to get satisfactory teaching in country districts when the teachers sent out are treated like that! In regard to the State Children Department, I have plenty of suggestive criticism to offer, but not now. It will keep until another day. However, I do deprecate, and I know that the men and women in my constituency deprecate, the expenditure on the new Receiving Home. The women, I am sorry to say, were not in any way consulted in regard to that. Apropos of this! I hope that when the Government again bring in the Architects Bill they will make it easy for women to become architects. We shall never have satisfactory homes and Government buildings until women have a voice in planning them. It seems to me that had we been consulted, much better use could have been made of £12,500 than has been done, and I trust that in future we shall be consulted in such matters. Then there is the question of probation officers and a proper scheme of probation, which should receive serious consideration here whenever amendments are being made to the State Children Act. There is no mention in the Speech of a home for mental defectives. That will create a good deal of discussion whenever it does come up, and I trust that every member will qualify himself for that discussion by reading something of the subject and realising what it means to our national life, unless we deal with the question wisely. As usual I was to a certain extent misrepresented in the Press on that subject, but I feel it is my bounden duty at all times to support anything which may be done for the improvement of those who are going to spoil our national efficiency unless we do something to prevent it. I also suggest that we should have a woman on the Price Fixing Commission. At present mutton is sold wholesale at Brunswick at from 4d. to 5d. a pound. That is what the grower gets for it. Yet we in the city have to pay 1s. per pound. In the Eastern States the retail prices are much lower than they are here. I commend that anomaly to the consideration of the Country Party. There are many measures to be dealt with during the coming session.

The Municipal Act is to be one of them -

When that comes before us I trust that those of us who think that something should be done for old age and invalid pensioners will get the support of hon. members generally. Let me read the following short extract from a letter which I received only a day or two ago -

If that does not make members realise that there should be some further consideration given to the old and incapacitated, I do not know what will.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: The local authority need not enforce payment.

Mrs COWAN: They do, anyhow. There should be something definite in the Act to prevent the enforcement. Then again, the Electoral Act is to come up. I hope we shall be able to have something done in regard to compulsory voting. It seems to me an absolute farce to make people place their names on the roll and not follow it up by making voting compulsory. If we did so, people would take a much greater interest in elections than they do. When they understand that if they do not vote they will be fined there will be plenty of voting, for it is when a person has to pay for something that he begins to regard it as of value. I have been asked to help secure proportional representation.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Do you believe in equality of votes, one vote one value?

The Minister for Mines: This is not question time.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: You cannot have proportional representation without it.

Mrs COWAN: We have one vote one value now, for this House.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: No, we have not.

Mrs COWAN: We all have the same vote for this House, anyhow. What we want is proportional representation on the lines of the Denmark system, which has proved the most satisfactory. In regard to immigration, it is most necessary that we should select only the right class of immigrant. We earnestly hope that proper examination will be made of immigrants before they come to the State and that we shall have only the best possible type. To be sure of that we should watch the English ports and also the port of entry here. I have been asked to draw the attention of the Minister for Railways to the fact that by charging a shilling for every perambulator put on a railway train he is militating against the very best class of immigrant, namely, our own children.

The Minister for Railways: I will withdraw it at once.

Mrs COWAN: It has been suggested that a sort of court-martial should be held to inquire into this question, and that the Government should be asked to make the punishment fit the crime; the suggested punishment being that the Minister for Railways should be made to parade the streets of Perth for the whole of one afternoon with a heavy infant on one arm and a bag of groceries on the other. If that is done it is thought that it will serve to draw the Minister's attention to the very great handicap which is placed upon mothers who wish to come into town to do some shopping and who cannot bring a perambulator, for the simple reason that they cannot afford to pay the railway fee it 1s. It may be suggested that the fee was imposed with a view to inducing the mothers to stay at home. I do not think it will have that effect; they must go out to do their shopping and since the Railway Department insist upon their leaving the perambulators at home and carrying heavy infants, those mothers do not feel very kindly disposed towards the Government. I hope that before the close of this Parliament we shall see something done for child and maternity endowment. Lately I read an interesting article in *The Sun*, a Sydney newspaper. I hope hon. members will read that article, for the suggestions contained therein are well worth considering. Under those suggestions women and children would have an endowment which would prevent much bitterness and unhappiness that at present exist. Also we could ultimately get a more satisfactory basic wage. The basic wage for a man with his wife and three children is not satisfactory and never will be, because there will always be far too many receiving money for thousands of children which the State will never get. I hope members, especially those opposite,

will look into this matter and see whether it would not be more in consonance with their ideas as expressed in their suggestion in regard to child and maternity endowment. They endorse the principle of endowment, thereby recognising the service rendered to the community by the mother in the case and nurture of the child, such payment to be a charge on the whole community and recognised as a right, and not associated in any way with the economic circumstances of the husband and father. It seems to me the suggestions made in that article in the *Sun* come nearer to that than anything else I know of, and nearer also to what women have asked for during many years past. One wonders whether it is not possible by an amending Act to bring in the right of women to vote in the unions. Many a strike would be prevented if the women had the right to vote.

Mc McCallum: And they would have to pay for it later on.

Mrs COWAN: It is most unfair that a strike should be called simply at the word of mainly the single men, when they would be far better off without the strike.

Mr McCallum: And quietly submit to the domination of the boss.

Mrs COWAN: It would not be so bad for the mothers and children if it were not that the children, 16 and 18 years of age and not the mothers, are allowed to vote on the question of a strike.

Mr McCallum interjected.

Mrs COWAN: The woman should have a voice in all these matters. Numbers of women in every section of the community would welcome something on those lines if it were possible to make it legal. I think it should be quite as legal to give a woman a vote in the union as it is to give the men a vote. As a woman I desire class consciousness of every kind to be eliminated.

Mc McCallum: Start on those around you.

Mrs COWAN: I am willing to do that. I have always stood for having no class consciousness amongst us. What is there that is socialistic about class consciousness? There is no socialism in that; it is anti-social. Better far to get on all together, and work for the whole of the community than to be talking about class consciousness in an age and time like this. There are other matters upon which I would have liked to touch, but the hour is getting late and I am therefore debarred from saying a great deal that I should like to say. Other opportunities however, will be afforded to me in which to speak. I am very proud to be here this afternoon. I thank hon. members for their kindness to me, though I feel it is perhaps a little hard on them as members of the House that I am here, because my presence has meant the withdrawal from the Speech of the word "gentlemen" as applied to them. There is only one way of remedying that. I cannot personally do so, but hon. members can all help women at the time of the next general election by having elected a sufficient number of them to enable the House to again be addressed as gentlemen, with the addition of the word "ladies and". I feel sure that the greatest kindness and tolerance would be displayed each to the other by the two sexes in this and all Parliaments. The views of both sides are more than ever needed in Parliament today. If men and women can work for the State side by side and represent all the different sections of the community, and if the male members of the house would be satisfied to allow women to help them and would accept their suggestions when they are offered, I cannot doubt that we should do very much better work in the community than was ever done before. I want hon. members to recollect when speaking and thinking of these things that we should all be wiser if we realised the truth of Kipling's lines—

There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal laws, and every single one of them is right.

We do not always remember this principle. People are apt to think that the point of view of men only must be right for men, whilst we women think that the point of view of women only must be right for women. That of course does not necessarily follow. What we should aim at is to get a *via media* [sic], so that we may work side by side; the women working along with the men, and thus there will come to us "self-knowledge, self-reverence and self-control, for these three alone lead men to sovereign heights" and to the achievement of those aims which should be sought by all Parliaments—the peace and happiness of those for whom they legislate.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1922
Hansard pp.155-160.

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Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [5.14]: I desire first of all to congratulate the Premier on his success in obtaining money to help us in placing immigration in this State on a reasonable footing. I am not going to say that the arrangement he has made is entirely satisfactory, because that remains to be proved. There are various matters which I am sorry have not been alluded to in the Governor's Speech. One is the need for erecting some sort of a suitable home for the aged women at Fremantle. So far as I am aware, nothing has been done or suggested in that matter. The place known as the Old Women's Home is very far from satisfactory. Indeed, it is well known that the place is not what it should be. Unfortunately conditions have not been improved for the poor old souls there recently, owing to the fact that women are being sent there from the lunatic asylum in order that more room may be provided in that institution. I have no doubt that this course is absolutely necessary; but it seems to me a most pathetic thing that the nice old women who are not troubled mentally should be obliged to live alongside others who are insane, even if they are so only to a small degree.

Hon. T. Walker: The same thing is done at the Old Men's Home.

Mrs. COWAN: I understood it was not so there.

Hon. T. Walker: Yes, I have seen some there.

Mrs. COWAN: They should not be there in either case. Something should be done to prevent the existence of such a state of affairs, and I feel sure men and women will join together in seeking relief for those people from such conditions.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A lunatic asylum is no place for them.

Mrs. COWAN: No, but there should be provided some building nearer to the asylum for their accommodation. We should not continue the present practice which disturbs the old age of these poor, worthy souls who have, perhaps, had a hard time during their life and are now, or should be, enjoying the few possible remaining restful years of their existence. Those last few years should not be made unhappy by coming into contact with the mentally deficient individuals who are taken there. It is bad enough to be old and it is, therefore, important that we should deal with this problem, realising that the finances of the State could be devoted in such a direction rather than in some avenues where expenditure is going on at present. I wish to pay a high tribute to the Colonial Secretary in connection with these matters. I am sorry that Mr Broun is not here and I regret to hear he is so ill. If we lose Mr Broun's services, we will be deprived of the offices of one who has been most sympathetic, kindly and helpful in these matters. Those of us who have had to deal with him realise that nothing was ever too much for him to do in securing kindly attention to these people and other privileges from time to time. Owing to financial difficulties, which, like the poor, appear to be always with us, there is not the possibility there should be of getting many of these things attended to. A home, too, for mental deficient is required. Such an institution is badly needed for women, and I regret that no mention of anything to be done in that direction is made in the Governor's Speech. I still hope that we shall see some reference to this work when the Estimates are placed before us, more especially as there have been one or two additions to the population in this direction, as a result of immigration. It is a great pity that the system of elective Ministries is not in operation here. I think such a system would give most satisfactory results, and I hope it will be introduced as soon as possible. I know there is a great diversity of opinion on the question, but certainly, if the administration of the affairs of government is to be more satisfactorily carried out, we should have honorary Ministers. I do not agree that the salaries of honorary Ministers should come out of those drawn by portfolioed Ministers. Such a practice is quite unfair. We realise that our Ministers are worked hard enough and deserve all they get. Surely something can be done in this direction. Had I not been a new member, I would have spoken last session when the appointment of a Public Works Committee was suggested, and I pointed out that it was more economical to have additional honorary Ministers, rather than have a sub-committee advising without any responsibility whatever. Supposedly advisory, such a committee would practically have constituted a Cabinet within a Cabinet. I am glad to see no mention is made of such a proposal this session. As to cotton growing, speaking from the women's standpoint, I welcome the advent of such an industry, despite what the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) said last night regarding "those two and a half acres of cotton". I cannot help realising that even two and a half acres are better than none at all, if only as an illustration of what can be done. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the member for Roebourne (Mr Teesdale) for what he has done in connection with this question. It is peculiarly an industry in which women and girls can help, more so probably than in any other industry. Especially is this so, if we can grow cotton in the areas north of Perth towards Geraldton. In my opinion, there is no question but that we can do so. I am all the more of that opinion particularly since I have seen what has been produced in the Bayswater district. There is plenty of such land available and, after what has been done at Bayswater, one realises the opportunities available for the employment of a considerable number of our young people taking them away from those influences which unsteady them at the present time, owing to lack of occupation as much as anything else. I greatly sympathise with much of what the Leader of the Opposition said regarding the waste that goes on in Government departments, but I do not agree with what he and others said regarding the salaries paid to civil servants. It would be of advantage if we appointed as a commissioner a commercial man with banking experience, in whom we would have absolute confidence, who would go into the whole question of the civil service. Those of us who have had something to do with Government departments, either through relatives who have been employed as civil servants, or otherwise, realise that there is room for improvement in the direction indicated. In many instances, I think the civil servants themselves would more than welcome such an inquiry. I know that to be a fact. I always feel sorry when I hear the rather contemptuous references made to civil servants whenever they are mentioned in this Chamber. Such an attitude will not encourage them to do their best. It should be made clear that when we talk about this subject, we refer to the system rather than to the civil servants and the work they do.

Mr Teesdale: Do you think a lot of the strong young fellows there would be better employed at farming?

Mrs. COWAN: Yes, certainly I do. I will have something to say about young people presently. A Bill of importance from the point of view of everyone in the State, and more especially of the

women and children, is to be introduced this session. I refer to the Hospitals Bill. I am glad we are to have such a measure, and I hope it will prove to be on satisfactory lines. To be such, it must provide that each one of us will share, on a graduated basis of taxation, the cost of these institutions. For my part, I would exempt no-one. No matter what an individual's wage or salary may be, each one should be prepared to pay his or her quota pro rata. I do not think we quite realise our responsibilities to each other in this respect. For that reason, I hope the Hospitals Bill will prove to be along the right lines. Allied to that question, is the necessity for providing further accommodation for women at the Perth Public Hospital. I know the Colonial Secretary is supporting us in our request in that direction. I am sorry the Premier is not present, but I would have liked to point out to him that the more immigrants he brings here, especially if the large bodies of women spoken of are to be brought out, the greater will be the necessity for additions to the hospital accommodation. There should be no suggestion of cutting any amount provided for this work off the Estimates this year. The amount sought is not a large one and this matter should receive the earnest consideration of members when it comes before them. Women especially realise that it is an urgent necessity. We cannot have a satisfactory race unless we pay proper attention to this matter and women should not be kept waiting for months, until they get in such a low condition that they require immediate treatment. They are often kept waiting for months before they can gain admission to our hospitals. Those already treated have to be placed on floors, or turned out of the hospital because there is not sufficient accommodation to meet the requirements of others in imperative need. Patients have had to be turned out too soon, frequently because of the necessity for taking in particularly bad cases, and patients have often to wait weeks or months before securing admittance. As to immigration, I note that there is nothing specified in connection with the Premier's scheme regarding the number contained in families who are to come out, nor is it indicated what is to be done with single men and single women. I was glad to hear the member for Toodyay (Mr Piesse) speak of the openings for poultry farmers. This is an important feature and I can believe that his statements are true, particularly in view of the price we are paying for eggs at present, and the prices we pay for many months in the year. On this basis, I can quite realise that poultry farming should be a lucrative means of earning livelihood. If we could induce women to go in for poultry farming, they should be able to make a good living. They would require to be looked after and educated in the industry, in order that they may be given some idea of how to get the best results. It would be a good thing if people already engaged in the industry would take some of these women and give them the necessary tuition and educate them in the responsibilities attached to poultry farming.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a more suitable occupation for women than for men.

Mrs. COWAN: I do not know that it is not, but I know that a good many men are doing well in this particular industry. For instance, it is rather hard work for a woman when she is asked to clean up and make over poultry yards, and do the digging that is involved. Apart from that aspect, it is a splendid occupation for them and I think women should do well at it.

Hon. P. Collier: Most of those who tried it did not do well.

Mrs. COWAN: Regarding settlement in the South-West, I do not know whether the best policy is to settle the new arrivals only in that direction. The Premier however, should be a better judge of that questions than most of us. The idea seems to be to settle the immigrants in the South-West and to leave the wheat belt for our own people. It might be a good idea to encourage development also in the North-West and spend some of the money there. When I realise that nothing has yet been done regarding the report from the Surveyor-General, Mr King, which was before us last year, I confess that I do not know how long it will be before anything can be done for our own young men. If the Australian, and particularly the Western Australian young men are to have the benefit of settlement on the wheat lands, and the newcomers are not to have that benefit, surely something should be done in connection with Mr King's report. Mr King told us that there were millions of acres in those districts, that is to say, two and a half million acres within seven miles of the railways between York and Beverley to the westward, and towards Dowerin, Cunderdin and Quairading to the eastward. He pointed out that only one million acres had been developed in an agricultural sense. Would it not be better, in any Closer Settlement Bill to be brought before us, if the line suggested by the Lands department surveyor and by the Surveyor General also, were followed rather than the proposal set out in the Bill last session and which was thrown out by the Legislative Council? If that were done, we should probably have a better chance of getting the land developed and with greater benefit to the settlers themselves. He suggested that this land

should be leased, that negotiations be opened with the owners and an arrangement made to acquire it on deferred terms of payment spread over 20 or 30 years. If the owner refused, the alternative should be heavy tax. That would be better than running the risk of introducing a Bill similar to that of last year. I did not quite agree with the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) yesterday when he said it was the fault of the women that the men came from the country to the town. The hon. member should have qualified that statement. What inducements are offered a woman to remain on the land until the man has made all his money? At Bunbury the other day I was invited to attend and speak at the settlers' conference then in session. The delegates seemed to have grasped all facts connected with the development of the soil, and to know everything there was to learn about farms and orchards. I could not help telling them it appeared to me that in their study of agricultural problems they had forgotten the human side, forgotten what was due to their uncomplaining women. For instance, one delegate admitted that when he had made a little money as the result of some outside work, he had put that money into super. He advised others to do the same. It seemed to me it would have been even better if he had spent at least half of it on his home. A woman who by a windlass is drawing household water from a well all day would greatly appreciate the provision of a pump and a few pipes leading to the kitchen and wash tubs. It would mean a tremendous muscular saving for her, and an appreciable difference to the comfort of the home. Again, in back country districts so little is done in the way of providing even proper cooking utensils and washing apparatus. Is it to be wondered at that the wife is bad-tempered and fails to greet her husband with a sweet smile and warm slippers when he comes home for the evening? It must be remembered that the woman on the farm is far more lonely than is the man. She is not the first to be considered when a trip to town is mooted, nor does she have the healthy outdoor occupation of the men of her household. It is not for her to engage in boundary riding and keeping an eye on the stock. I know what I am talking about, for as a girl I often rode after stock, and invariably found it a most exhilarating exercise; whereas I have not always enjoyed the washing and cooking that falls to a woman's lot. Very much more consideration might reasonably be given to the lonely women in the country. Telephones ought to be provided as a means of breaking down their terrible isolation. Mr Poynton will see that they are provided at reasonable rates in the future—

Mr Davies: They will all have wireless in their homes presently.

Mrs. COWAN: I do not think you men quite realise the woman's standpoint, or appreciate her unselfishness, which alone enables her to remain on the land. At some of the group settlements I was told that, 18 months ago, women were brought out here from English factories, having no knowledge whatever of the work awaiting them in the Australian bush. They found plenty of food to cook, but no utensils with which to cook it. They knew nothing of the using up of kerosene tins as buckets and cooking pots, had no idea of how to shape a fruit tin into a milk jug. These expedients are all very enjoyable at a picnic and we Australians with our initiative think of them, but it is unreasonable to expect a knowledge of them in people from England whose baking has always been done at the bakehouse and who know nothing of the art of making bread.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Before the war everybody in England knew how to bake bread.

Mrs. COWAN: I am afraid the hon. member is somewhat inaccurate in making such a statement. I agree that there should be better examination of the immigrants coming out here. It is painful to see the condition of some of them. Even tubercular people and mental deficient have been sent out to us. Of these unfortunate classes we have quite enough here without adding to their numbers through our special scheme of immigration. I like the suggestion that we should have our own doctor in England, but in addition I want to see a woman doctor appointed for the women and children. She would get at the root of much which, probably a man doctor would not have the patience to arrive at. We all know that the work of Dr Roberta Jull in our schools was far more satisfactory than that which could be done by any man. Dr Jull is at present in England. Most of us hope she will return and continue her work in our schools; if she does not come back, her services might be availed of in England.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Dr D Montgomery did a great deal of good work in our schools before Dr Jull took over.

Mrs. COWAN: I do not dispute that. We should be extremely careful to see that no man who is imprisoned in this State and who, by his antecedents, is likely to be of criminal instincts all his life,

should be allowed to nominate his wife and children out to this State, when they can get a better living and be much happier among their friends in the Old Country. This sort of thing has actually occurred and we should see that it is not repeated. I am glad the Arbitration Act is to be amended. I trust the amendments will include a provision making continuity of work an obligation wherever there is continuity of employment. It would be welcomed by many in every walk of life and would do a great deal to allay industrial unrest. Unemployment has been greatly in evidence for some time past. It has proved extremely difficult to cope with, because it is of the kind against which doles can do very little good. Have we ever considered how the go-slow tendencies of so many are to be remedied wherever found, whether in the public service, in industrial circles, or in the commercial world? Until we consider that aspect of the question, I am afraid unemployment will continue to increase. Another evil we require to watch is seen in the effect of unduly high wages paid to boys and girls. I say "unduly high" because there is no corresponding obligation on those young people. I am speaking of all classes. The evil is not more evident in the industrial world than it is in the commercial or in the public service. So long as that condition continues, we shall not get continuity of employment, or induce investors to start industries which will help to employ our young people. No boy or girl should receive better pay than is awarded to many married men. The young people, many of them, do nothing towards the upkeep of the home, nor do they realise that they should be making provision for a home of their own. They are to be seen out enjoying themselves in all sorts of places without any attempt to realise the true responsibilities of life, which sooner or later must be borne in on them. We all realise much more than in the past the necessity for giving attention to these points. I do not wish to see wages lowered, but I do wish to see something done to prevent irresponsible young people from being better paid than are many married men and women. I have often wondered whether the age-wage system is a good one. The results are so unsatisfactory to parents and to the community generally. Why not grade the workers in all forms of service and grade the pay accordingly? Is it any wonder that in these circumstances there are unemployed and would not attention to these details help to remedy the evil?

Mr Willcock: They would all be on the one grade, just as they are now all on the one minimum wage.

Mrs Cowan: Not all are getting the minimum wage, but the people getting the bigger wage are being forced to maintain those who cannot equal them in any way and who are not allowed to work to the extent of their capacity.

Hon. M F Troy: How do you know that?

Mr Richardson: If a loophole be left, somebody is bound to take advantage of it.

Mrs Cowan: Then again I always understood that the best thing for a community was an eight hours day—eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation and rest, and if you wished it, the development of the mind, and eight hours for sleep. The whole of that idea, however, appears to have broken down, and it seems to be now that it does not matter in the least how much time one devotes to hard and toilsome work beyond the eight hours, provided that double pay is given for it. I cannot see how such a thing can be beneficial to the community, either to the young or to the old. I have watched it for some time and it does not appear to have given satisfactory results, but I am willing, if it is possible, to have it demonstrated that it is not a wise course to work the first eight hours for ordinary pay and a subsequent eight hours for double pay. There are more important things than double pay to be considered, and it would have the effect of reducing unemployment greatly if no one was allowed to work overtime in any avocation, except perhaps in a few necessary cases. At present overtime is worked in almost every form of employment, professional or otherwise. I hope too that something will be done—I do not know whether it can be dealt with under the Arbitration Act or whether unions can adopt it—in the direction of seeing that mothers are given a voice in deciding whether or not there shall be a strike. As a mother I have always held that view and dozens of other mothers have expressed a similar opinion to me. If we were to take a referendum on the question tomorrow it would be carried without any difficulty. Therefore I trust that something will be done to bring this about. Another matter on which I wish to speak, and which undoubtedly leads to unemployment is gambling. It also leads to going slowly and to a distaste for wholesome work. It cannot be denied that wholesome work is good for us all. This Parliament should discourage carnivals and lotteries by making it illegal for those under 21 years of age to take any part in them. This would be the means of inducing our

young people to become steady workers and to give a better return to their employers, as well as to make them happier than they are, and a more thrifty and saving element in our community. In this regard I would like to quote what Ruskin says on the subject -

But there is one way of wasting time, of all the vilest, because it wastes, not time only, but the interest and energy of your minds. Of all the ungentlemanly habits into which you can fall—

and I am willing to add to this “unladylike” as women are indulging in gambling almost as much as men.

—the vilest is betting or interesting yourselves in the issues of betting. It unites nearly every condition of folly and vice; you concentrate upon a matter of chance, instead of upon the subject of true knowledge, and you back opinions which you have no grounds for forming merely because they are your own. All the insolence of egoism is in this; and so far the love of excitement is complicated with the hope of winning money, you turn yourselves into the basest sort of tradesmen—those who live by speculation. Were there no other ground for industry, this would be a sufficient one, that it protected you from the temptation to so scandalous a vice. Work faithfully, and you will put yourselves in possession of a glorious and enlarging happiness, not such as can be won by the speed of a horse, or marred by the obliquity of a ball.

That puts it very well. There are many in this House who feel as I do on this question, but they are so afraid of being called wowzers that they will not come out into the open and let us know how they view the matter. With regard to picture shows, these too often degenerate into a pernicious force, which makes for disintegration of high character in the young.

Mr Munsie: They are not too bad; I go very often.

Mrs Cowan: I, too, go sometimes and I find that occasionally the pictures are very good. But there are some that are distinctly objectionable, and we all know that that is so. The women of this State have for a long time past asked for the appointment of a censorship board. That is one of the things we would gladly see the Government give attention to. If the power to create such a body does not exist the matter could be attended to by an amendment of existing legislation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Every picture is already censored by the Federal authorities.

Mrs COWAN: What we want is a censorship such as exists in Tasmania, where the preventive effect arising from that censorship has been most marked. For that reason alone it would be wise to establish such a board here, and its mere existence I think would bring about the desired result. I wish to say a few words in connection with the Como trams. I feel that no member of Cabinet can afford to let people think that his standard of honour is lower than that of the common gambler, whose word has to be his bond, unless he accepts the alternative of being booted and hooted out from the fraternity to which he belongs. It is not the construction of the Como tramway to which I take exception, it is the breaking of a promise made in this House. Examples of this kind must be detrimental in their effect on the national character. I feel strongly about this matter. An Englishman's pride is that his word is his bond, and any repudiation shocks the community badly and it can only be viewed with disapprobation by all right thinking people. I accept the assurance of the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture that they were not consulted. Surely if it be necessary to get the sanction of Parliament to appoint a nurse at a North West town—Derby, I think—is not as important to keep a pledge given to this House before spending even a so-called “paltry” £41,000 on a losing proposition such as we are told the Como tramway is likely to be. Some members think that this tramway may, like other “babies,” grow into a fine child, but “babes” of unhealthy parentage, like this one, are apt to wither and become sickly and a costly liability instead. On all these questions of honour and moral dealing we may well recall to our minds the belief held by that great statesman, John Bright, which was—

That the national morality of the nation will in the course of history affect it in the same way that the private standards of an individual affect those with whom he comes in contact.

Bright sums it up in the following pithy words—

If nations——

or, as in this case, "Governments" — reject or deride the moral law, there is a penalty which will inevitably follow.

To hon. members and the members of the Government I would quote these words—

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;

Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.

This will sooner or later happen to us as a people and as a Parliament unless we can do something to prevent unconstitutional acts being done in the future. There is one other matter to which I wish to refer. In a recent issue of the *Sunday Times* I read a paragraph in which it was stated that the allowance to State children had been reduced by 50 per cent. I do not think that is true; in fact, I am sure it is not. I would however, like the Government to give the public an assurance that it is not so because the subject has been referred to by many people, and if it really were carried into effect, a great hardship would be created. I have no intention tonight of dealing with the subject of licensing and other matters, because we shall have another opportunity to do so. The suggestion which has been made in regard to the holding of a conference of representatives of the State Parliaments on the question of Federation is a wide one and I hope it will take place, and if not, that this Parliament will voice its opinion on the Federal position in no uncertain way and forwards its views to the Prime Minister so that the injustices which we have suffered for so long may be remedied. I spoke against federation in the days of long ago because I thought it was 30 years before its time, and the words of those who spoke against it then have proved to be absolutely true. Now, however, we are told by way of reply, "We are very sorry. You had all the sense and we had all the sentiment." It is time that some of us with the sense got together and remedied the condition of affairs now existing, because the deficit cannot be satisfactorily coped with until we receive more revenue from taxation now taken unfairly by the Federal Government.

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

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Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.35]: Most of the members who have spoken have referred to immigration. The same old cry that is being raised at present has been heard ever since this country was first settled. As long ago as 1829 we had a visitor to these shores who afterwards wrote a book. I do not think there are many people who have it, or have heard of it. The author was Dr Wilson. During his short visit he found that many of the wrong type of immigrants had been selected for the Swan River "including lazy, idle, hulking, insolent fellows".

Hon. P. Collier: Now we know the genesis of the six families.

Mrs COWAN: We are told that, so long ago as 1829, all the land within easy reach and transport on the Swan and Canning Rivers had been given away and was not available for closer settlement. Dr Wilson gently suggested that if grants had been limited to a maximum of one square mile, things would have been better. Evidently an enormous acreage had been allotted to single migrants and the grants were unwieldy. The settlers had grievances then and they were heavy grievances. One was most vexing; they were taxed for pilot dues, it seems that this form of taxation was somewhat premature. Again, the civil servants were aggrieved because they were not allowed candles or oil, the Home Government having decided that there were plenty of whales on the coast and, presumably, the civil servants could go out and catch one whenever oil was required for the office lamps. I often wondered why civil servants, for many years, worked till only 4.00 p.m. When we read the early history, we realise that it was probably due to this one of the Government's petty economies.

Hon. P. Collier: Due to want of light.

Mrs COWAN: We hear a lot about the hardships migrants undergo today. I know they have to face hardships that many who come here must find it painful and trying to meet in our hot climate and must have many disagreeable experiences. But these people do not have to meet real old-fashioned pioneering difficulties. I should like to quote from a letter written by my grandmother in 1841, in which she informed her father in England that the new settlers were pluckily facing plenty of difficulties. Two of these difficulties our newcomers have no longer to face. We hear an awful lot nowadays about the high cost of living. One of the difficulties mentioned in the letter was the high cost of necessities entailed by wheat being £1 per bushel and 2s. 6d. for the grinding and other food equally dear. Transport from Fremantle to York in those days cost £25 per ton. I

should like our friends of the Country Party and of the goldfields to remember that figure when they are discussing the terrible freights and fares charged on the railways today.

Mr Latham: We would readily pay them today if we could get the same price for wheat.

Mrs COWAN: The second difficulty was one which newcomers today are not called upon to face—the danger from the natives. In a letter written from “Grassdale”, near York, she said—

Mr Brown has accepted the appointment of assistant surveyor to the Governmentbut he will have a most difficult task to perform, not unattended with danger. Two soldiers will constantly attend him for protection and a civilian also to take care of baggage, instruments, etc. In case of any disturbance from the natives, a detachment of soldiers would have to be sent for from the nearest barracks to quell it.

The nearest barracks, so far as I can remember, was 60 miles away, and I cannot imagine any disturbance on the part of the natives being quelled with satisfaction to the sufferers after having to send that distance. But it indicates one of the dangers with which the early pioneers had to contend and yet we spend a tremendous amount of, I think, unnecessary sympathy on those who are coming out now, especially when we remember they are of exactly the same blood as our early pioneers, and will ultimately make good in just the same splendid way. These trials did not hurt the early pioneers or their descendants, and I do not think the lesser trials of today will hurt the newcomers, though I do wish to see everything possible done to help them and make the burden easier for the women and children. Group settlements are said to present many hardships nowadays, but those hardships can be faced and overcome. I was greatly interested the other day in a letter I received from a woman relative, who is helping her husband to found a home on one of these blocks. Speaking of the trials of a woman in a farming district, she said - “Happy the country and the woman with no history, but oh, how dull! Do collect all the news you can for me.”

Hon. P. Collier: That is a woman all over.

Mrs. COWAN: I quite agree, but if it makes her happy, she is in a better position to make happy her man when he comes home to enjoy the good things of the table that she has prepared for him. There has been a lot of criticism of the Premier's defiant optimism in this matter. As a descendant of one of the early pioneers, I am ready to stand by the Premier in his defiant optimism, or by any other person at the head of affairs that is desirous of carrying out a similar policy. There is no question about that policy being the right one. Even the Leader of the Opposition, I think, does not really feel all that he says, if one is to judge by the glint of his eye. I believe that if he were in the same position as the Premier, he would have a certain defiant optimism on this question of immigration, just as the Premier of Queensland has. When listening to the criticism of the member for Katanning (Mr A. Thomson) and also that of the member for Claremont (Mr J. Thomson), which were not nearly so constructive as they might have been, I thought that possibly it was a case of “Save me from my friends.” If those two hon. Members really support the immigration policy, why not help us by bringing to bear on the problem all the constructive wisdom of their command? Let the whole House join hands in an endeavour to do everything possible to make this country what it should be. I feel that we shall survive these troubles just as the settlers of 1828 and 1843 survived theirs. We reap the results today in a building where we have the lines of government and law-making laid down as those early settlers could never have imagined in their wildest dreams. Therefore I do not think we need be as pessimistic as the president of the Primary Producers' Association sometimes seems. I have a great admiration personally for that gentleman.

Hon. P. Collier: Political admiration is all right, but personal!

Mrs. COWAN: I do not think anybody has the right to go on posing as the “guide, philosopher, and friend” of the community generally unless he is prepared to stand up to criticism, unless he is prepared to come out fairly into the open and stand for Parliament and let us know what he really does think, so giving us the opportunity, if we think it desirable, to take him as our guide, philosopher, and friend. I speak feelingly on this subject, because one of the reasons why I myself am in this House is that I perhaps have been to some extent the guide, philosopher and friend of other women. When invited to stand for this Parliament, I therefore had to stand, though I never

thought of so doing, and never expected to be here. It is a much nicer role to keep in the background and pull the strings and direct other people what to do, in fact to be the power behind the throne, than to stand up here and be the target of all sections of the community. Therefore I think we ought to have a constructive policy from the president of the Primary Producers' Association. Let him come right out and enter the next Parliament and give us his views here. Perhaps I shall not be here to listen to them, but I can learn from outside what they are. Then the president of the Primary Producers' Association will learn what are the difficulties to be encountered when he tries to convince other people.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Don't you think he would lose his power if he came here?

Mrs. COWAN: I am not going into that side of the question. That is not my business. But I know that everybody who comes here learns a good deal if he has any sense, and for one thing learns to be balanced. During the last few days we have heard a good deal about the wages given to new settlers. I have had a good many letters from various migrants, women as well as men, and have not had any complaints with regard to the wages paid. A man told me that he gave up his job deliberately, although he was quite contented and happy in it, because he wanted to do something else. This also has not been satisfactory and he is now unemployed. He was getting £3 a week and his keep. Therefore I can confirm the statements of this member for York (Mr Latham) as to wages paid to new arrivals.

Mr Corboy: You say it is all correct because of one case.

The Colonial Secretary: The member for York quoted several cases.

Mrs. COWAN: I support the Premier's policy because it is the only one before us at present. I do hope the Government will do something in the matter of an agricultural college. Such a college would afford sensible and practical training for young men who wish to gain a knowledge of agriculture in different centres, seeing that we have entirely different types of soil and even of climate to deal with in the tremendous area of this State. I hope we shall not have any opposition in this respect from other sections of the community. The *Sunday Times* puts the case for an agricultural college remarkably well—

We have colossal problems to solve, agricultural and pastoral, and yet the Agricultural Department have a smaller vote and a smaller staff than that of any other mainland State. Out of the total production of nearly 23 millions sterling, those two industries, agricultural and pastoral, yield upwards of 14 millions, while mining gives us very little more than three millions.

We want to do a fair thing to all, and I think we should not hear quite such bitter animosity as we do from time to time, from people who seem to think that when a little money is spent in one direction it is something that another section are robbed of. It is a great pity that that spirit should come in, because logically industries that bring us in 14 millions deserve more consideration than those that bring us in the lesser amount. I am sorry that the Premier, when speaking the other day, made no mention of the splendid work which has been done by the Women's Immigration Auxiliary Council, a body that was formed a little more than 12 months ago. I know that he does appreciate their work, and that he recognises their assistance as being very valuable. I did hope that I, as the only woman here, would not have to allude to that work, or bring it forward in any way: but I have come to the conclusion that it is not altogether wise to allow the women's side of the work of this community to be always hidden, as with the light, under a bushel. It is a body comprising 100 women who are accepted by the Government as an auxiliary council. It consists of sub-committees, who meet women from Home on their arrival here, give them advice, visit them if they are in hospital, and look after them in many ways. I have here a letter which is quite interesting to quote, especially in view of what the Leader of the Opposition has said regarding the political work of the women of the community being greatly appreciated. The letter says —

On behalf of the settlers on the above group (No. 5, Manjimup), I desire to thank you and your council most sincerely for the kind thought in sending along bundles of reading matter. I can assure you that your action and interest are greatly appreciated, especially by the womenfolk, several of whom are by themselves all day, while the children are at school and husbands at work. I must thank you

myself also, since the books and papers help to make the people more happy, and a happy group is a contented group and a happy, contented group is a joy to yours faithfully.

That is a great tribute to the work of the women, and all the other committees have similar testimonials. The council is also looking after the women in the home and taking them to picture shows and giving them entertainments. We are also taking them to private houses, where they are met in the right way and given the right kind of social welcome. If similar action is taken in every direction, something can be accomplished in making them feel at home. I would like to thank the Premier for sending a most delightful message to the Women's Migration Auxiliary Committee, which was given them yesterday, and which I can assure the Premier was much appreciated. He will probably see references to it in the Press later on. There is another matter I wish to touch on, and it is that the Government are considering the necessity for attending to the civil service grade increases. I am very glad to know this, and I trust that something really definite is going to be done at last. It is only a fair thing for those people who have been all these years kept in suspense by one Government and another Government, and by one Commissioner and another Commissioner until they do not know where they are.

Mr Corboy: It is a pre-election half-promise.

Mrs. COWAN: I think it will be a very wise and right thing to grant those increases. The civil servants should be given the fair and just consideration to which they are entitled. We should remember in this House that the civil servants are a decided asset to the community in every respect. One thing to their credit is that they were the first body of people in this State to start vocational training for the soldiers and that they found means to provide for the work some considerable time before it was taken over by others. That stands greatly to their credit. Again, it was the civil servants who created the distress fund which was such a valuable organisation during the war, and the work of which was so admirable. Through the agency of the National Council of Women the most valuable assistance was rendered by them in the distress which existed on the land during the war. So that all sections of the community have a right to feel grateful for what was done by them. I always deprecate very strongly, perhaps owing to my being the wife of a civil servant who was 50 years in the service, when I hear from time to time the carping criticism cast on that body of men and women by some members of this House. The civil servants are, as regards the main body, thoroughly straightforward and able men. For that reason I hope that the tone and attitude to which I have referred will not be renewed, because such statements are not conducive to making the civil servants do their very best by the community, especially when this, the highest body in the land, never gives them a note or a word of appreciation. I noticed with pleasure that the Government propose to erect a mental detention ward, though I do not altogether agree with the site which has been chosen at Point Resolution. I am glad that the Government have realised the absolute necessity for such a ward. All those of use who are members of the Hospital Board recognise the importance of having such a ward and are glad that the Government have at least made a definite move. The women's bodies who are doing active work in various humane directions appreciate the attitude of the Colonial Secretary towards these questions. He is following admirably in the footsteps of his predecessor, the member for Beverley (Mr Broun), who displayed a very live interest in these matters. Of course it was not always his fault that he was not able to do everything that the world have desired, and we therefore cannot hold Mr Broun responsible for the fact that the mental detention ward is still where we find it day. I would however, urge on the Government to reconsider the question of site. I doubt whether Point Resolution is the best that could be chosen on which to build the ward. As a woman I deprecate strongly the taking away of valuable river sites of this description from public use. The picked positions on the river should be reserved for the benefit of the community, where the people may indulge in sports and enjoy freedom on their holidays.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The experts recommended a river site.

Mrs. COWAN: Quite so, but there are other river sites which would not interfere with the rights of the people and which would be as suitable as that at Point Resolution. Of course I am not an expert, but while they may theoretically know what is best, they are not always infallible in such matters. We have many miles of river frontage from the Upper Swan reaches away down to Fremantle, and surely it ought to be possible to select a position on which to erect the ward

without causing inconvenience to the community and interfering with its rights. Our reserves, especially those with river frontages, should, in my opinion, be kept for the people, for all time.
Hon. W. C. Angwin: You realise that this is not to be an asylum: it is to be a detention ward.

Mrs. COWAN: I realise that, but we must not forget that in such a ward we frequently get a risky type of patient.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not in such a ward.

Mrs. COWAN: Oh yes. If we are to place a mental ward in the vicinity of a small settled community, our action will not be conducive to the peace of mind of the residents of the locality.

The Colonial Secretary: No person who has been certified to be insane will be received there.

Mrs. COWAN: But these people are often really insane and it is not until they have been treated at the ward and it is found they are actually mental that they are sent away. They may often be incipiently insane when received there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You cannot do too much for these people.

Mrs. COWAN: I agree and am glad to know that the Colonial Secretary is showing sympathetic consideration for those who are permanent inmates of the Hospital for the Insane, and especially for those who have lucid intervals. It is sad to know that these people have often been detained in the ordinary quarters at the asylum and have not been given many of those little extras which might have done much towards mitigating their difficult conditions. I hope what the Minister proposes to do will lead to good results, for we need to do more for these cases.

The Colonial Secretary: I hope members will not stop me from doing what is best.

Mr Mann: Don't be stopped.

Mrs. COWAN: I wish to say a few words on the housing question. We have been told that it is the intention of the Government to present this session a Town Planning Bill. I hope that they will not again fail in this direction and that we shall be able to do something more in connection with town planning that has been done in the past. Until we adopt a scheme of this description, as well as a different method of taxation, it will be impossible to do what the best authorities suggest. It would certainly be wise to allow the local bodies the option of taxing on the improve or unimproved value, so long as there was uniformity. In some districts taxation is levied in one way and in others in a different way. Uniformity would help considerably to establish the success of town planning proposals. We should realise how short we are of houses and attention ought to be given to what is being done in the other States. It is certainly time that we here did more than we are actually doing. I would like to see the Workers' Homes Act made to apply to the metropolitan area, and at the same time to see the Government adopt a scheme on the lines of that in force in Queensland by which it would be possible to provide houses for people earning incomes of not more than £160 to £200 per annum, and thus enable those people to purchase their homes in from 15 to 20 years. The cost of such homes need not be more than, say, £450.

Captain Carter: What sort of houses would they be?

Mrs. COWAN: They would be constructed of wood. We know it would not be possible to build a house of brick and mortar for that price. In Queensland there is not much to be seen in the way of bricks or stone. I am glad to learn that the Minister for Railways has decided that he will endeavour to do something in the direction of reducing railway and tramway fares, and that he proposes to give consideration in this respect to married men and school children. That will mean that it will be possible to bring into being better housing schemes, and we shall no longer have the spectacle which exists today of so many people being crowded together in premises that were never intended to accommodate so many. There is far too much of that sort of thing going on today as people cannot afford to pay 30s. a week for four-roomed houses, some of which are without anything in the shape of conveniences. It is time that serious consideration was given to this problem and therefore one is glad to know the Government are serious in respect of town planning proposals. The result cannot be otherwise than good. I thank the Premier on behalf of

the women of the community, and the men too for that matter — the subject is just as important for the men as it is for the women — for having granted to us the small sum of £200 with which to start baby health centres. No more important work than that can be undertaken in a community, and it has been a great surprise to us that no Government in the past has attempted to do anything in this direction. The importance of protecting child life cannot be over estimated, especially when we find that in Western Australia the death rate is 78.26 per thousand, while in Queensland it is 54.16. The reason for the comparatively low rate in Queensland, as well as the lower rate than ours in most of the other States, is that the Governments in other parts of Australia realise the need for spending money in the direction of saving child life. I have information which tells me that in Brisbane, for instance, maternity training schools for nurses are being established. They have in that city four baby clinics, while there are six in outside centres, and all are maintained entirely by the Government. Then again we find that in Sydney, Government assistance for the past three years has been given to the Royal Society for the Welfare of Mothers and special baby grants have been made. Towards the erection of buildings no less a sum than £5,615 has been granted. For the year ended June last the amount spent on baby clinics was £30,718, on salaries £4,138 and on contingencies £14,021. These figures are exclusive of subsidies and special grants to various institutions for the treatment and care of children and are also exclusive of the expenditure on the State Childrens' Relief Department. When Western Australia approaches the stage arrived at in New South Wales we shall be in a very much better position than we are in now. We have two associations here who have started the clinics and the Government, as I have said, have helped us with a grant of £200 a year — while the municipality gives £200 and £100 comes from each association, thus making the total amount required. We hope to see this sum of money grow yearly and it is our wish that the Government will realise the great importance of the work being undertaken, and will put on the Estimates the sum of at least £1,000 to enable us to carry on the work in other towns and in the country districts. Those who are living at the group settlements need assistance in this way. Training should be given to the mothers regarding the health of infants and how to keep them healthy. Only the other day a telegram received from the Commissioner of Health in Brisbane was to the effect that the expenditure in that State last year in connection with baby clinics was £2,572 and in addition to that a grant was made by the Government of £1,200 for the Kindergarten Association, while no less than £5,500 was spent on buildings. This should make the Government of Western Australia realise our request is a modest one. All the same we thank the Premier for having agreed to give us this first £200 because we realise it means that we can make a start. I believe our health expenditure is actually £21,016 per annum, although the vote is £31,071. It appears that of that £31,071 no less than £8,809 goes to the sanitation of Government and public buildings. Surely this should be charged to some other vote. It hardly seems a fair deal to the Health Department that no change should be made in that respect, and that it should not be possible to allow the department that full amount of £31,071 unhampered in any way. Some further allowance ought to be made to the Health Department, because the present position is most misleading to the public. Lately I have been approached by several people on the subject of undesirable books and picture postcards — I am not referring to the cinema pictures. The books and picture cards complained of are distinctly of an immoral tone, and verge on the indecent. We have an Act (Ed. VII., No.14) under which one would imagine that everything could be done. However, I find it is extremely difficult to deal with these undesirable productions. I spoke to the Commissioner of Police and asked whether he could not take action. He admitted that these books and pictures had a very bad effect, but it seems there is very little he can do. Surely something could be done! If the Government cannot deal with the matter satisfactorily under the Act on the statute-book, I want to know why they cannot take other steps, perhaps give us a board of censors.

Mr Mann: Can it not be dealt with in the courts?

Mrs. COWAN: No, because the juries refuse to regard these books and, picture cards as being vicious. Of course, when we have already vitiated the moral tone of the people, we cannot expect them to say that a thing is harmful to the younger members of the community. Yet we know that these picture cards and books are harmful, and without being the least bit of a wowsler, I cannot imagine any hon. Member thinking that nothing should have a board of censors. It would be more effective than trial by jury. I feel sure the Police Department thoroughly approve of an sympathise with my views in this respect. I should like to say a word in regard to what has been said about local manufacture of pipes for the water supply extension. I entirely agree with the remarks made by the member for Perth (Mr Mann) the other day, and hope that every possible consideration will be given to the local tenderers, and that the Government will not even attempt to put up any sort

of machinery or plant with a view to having the pipes made departmentally. It is a mistake for us to go on tinkering with these things in that way. I listened to the debate in the House last year, when a good deal was said about the State Trading Concerns. I then came to the conclusion that the more we did to assist private enterprise, the better. Some Hon. Members wanted to do away with one thing, while others wished to see the last of another. None seemed to consider the question of principle, nor could Hon. Members make up their minds to trust the Government to deal with these things. However, I think we can trust the Government and therefore I am opposed to the setting up of another expensive plant in order that the Government might do this work themselves, to the detriment of private enterprise. We ought to learn a lesson from what was said in the Eastern States the other day in respect of the fruit pool. We should profit by such lessons more than we seem ready to do.

EDITH COWAN

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

Administration Act Amendment Bill, 1922
Women's Legal Status Bill, 1923.

ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Edith Cowan successfully moved for the passage of a Private Member's Bill to provide that whenever a child died intestate the mother should share equally with the father in any estate of the child.

ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 7 September 1922

Hansard pp.650-653

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [9.25]: In moving the second reading said: I have been asked to move this Bill in the interests of the mothers of Western Australia. They are anxious to be placed on exactly the same footing as the father in the case of sons or daughters dying intestate. I think we all now realise that no man wishes his wife to be on any different footing from himself, that is, when he comes to think about the matter. I feel sure the House will be with me in regard to this Bill, more especially when hon. Members realise it is the earnest desire of women to be placed on an equal footing with men in this respect. The measure merely asks for equality between husband and wife.

Hon. P. Angwin: Can you give us some reason why we should pass the Bill?

Mrs COWAN: The reason that the Bill is absolutely just is sufficient. During the war it was found that the want of an amendment such as the measure proposes was very detrimental in many instances to mothers who were left in a more or less dependent condition, and whose sons had died intestate. The existing law has operated unjustly in many cases. I leave the matter to hon. Members' sense of justice. I think every man has had time to look into the question generally of late years. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr LAMBERT: I think you would be well advised to give more reasons than you have yet given, because there are very wide principles involved in the Bill. Parliament is not moved by sentiment.

Mrs COWAN: If it is not moved by sentiment, then it should be moved by justice. I know the hon. Member interjecting feels in that respect just as I do myself.

Mr LAMBERT: Can you show where injustice has occurred?

Mr UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [9.28]: I second the motion for the second reading of the Bill. In doing so I am not greatly worried regarding the necessity for the measure, or, as the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr Lambert) says, the justice of it. We have been living in difficult times, but times and conditions are changing. In the days of my parents it was understood that everything belonged to the man and the woman being to some extent a chattel. We now realise that the man and the woman are equal partners in the business. All that the Bill asks is that the mother shall have an equal share with the father of any money or property left by a son or a daughter who dies intestate. I do not know that it requires many words to demonstrate the fairness of such a measure. Even if the parents are not agreeing too well, still each of them is entitled to his or her share. If they are agreeing well - as they should agree - then it is all right, because they will divide between themselves anyhow. I hope the House will not adjourn consideration of the Bill, but will pass it. The principle underlying the measure is in accordance with the conditions under which we live at present. The Bill will make a mother an equal on shouldering with the father the responsibility for the children they have looked after and an equal in the result sought to be achieved by the Bill.

Hon. W.C. Angwin (North-East Fremantle) [9.31]: I support the second reading of the Bill. It is customary, however, when introducing a Bill to advance some reasons for the measure.

Mr Underwood: It does not require reasons; the Bill explains itself.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: As a the member for Coolgardie (Mr Lambert) interjected, we cannot always act on sentiment. I know of instances where money has been left by a person and the father and mother have been living separately. The father was living in another part of Australia. The mother reared the family and yet, when the son died leaving some money, the mother could not get it and it went to the father.

Mr Willcock: There are quite a number of such instances.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I thought the member for West Perth would have advanced some such instances to show why this Bill should be introduced. The measure is along the right lines and is one that we should all support. The member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) seems to think there is no necessity to show where hardship has been worked under the existing law.

Mr Lambert: It is the first time he has been in such a reasonable frame of mind for a long time.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Some reasons should have been given in support of the Bill, which I have much pleasure in supporting.

Mr Willcock (Geraldton) [9.33]: I support the Bill. Some cases have come under my notice which show the necessity for such a measure. I do not suppose the Bill would have been brought forward had it not been for our experiences during the war. Most young people do not think there is any necessity to take steps in anticipation of dying before their parents. We know that during the war period many young people went away and, unfortunately, were killed. They left amounts varying from £50 to £100 and in all cases that money would go to the father. If there is anyone who has been connected with the upbringing of children, who is entitled to anything, it is surely the mother. The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) is to be congratulated upon trying to secure equality and justice for her own sex in these matters, but the Bill does not go far enough. There are several other matters that could be included. For instance, if a man dies intestate and dies without issue, the widow only gets a certain proportion of the estate, whereas, if the wife died first, the husband would receive the whole of the estate.

Mrs COWAN: That is only when they die intestate.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: The estate could be secured by order of the court, in accordance with a measure we passed some years ago.

Mr Willcock: That is so. There is no reason why the widow should not have that benefit without expense, just as in the case of the husband. I think the member for West Perth could well have adjourned the consideration of the measure and endeavoured to provide for some of these other aspects, because women suffer under serious disabilities. I know of a case recently in which the husband died intestate, leaving an estate worth about £1,000. In that case half the estate went to a relative of the husband who had not been in communication with the family for 10 or 15 years.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I know of a case where the wife went away and left the husband—

Mr Willcock: That may be so. The member for West Perth will have considerable support in any effort she makes to equalise the rights as between woman and man. The Bill deals with one way in which this can be achieved, but I do not think it goes far enough, especially regarding people dying intestate. If the hon. member looks into this aspect, she will be able to do a considerable amount of good for her sex.

Mr Lambert (Coolgardie) [9.35]: The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) should have advanced reasons for seeking the approval of the House to these amendments to the Administration Act. A striking instance came under my notice three or four years ago, when a young man was killed at the war. The mother had lived apart from her husband for 16 or 18 years. She had looked after that boy from infancy, and although the son had been dependent upon her practically until he went away to the war, she was not able to apply for probate. This is one of the details in connection with our Administration Act which suggests that there is a field for investigation. If there is a field for serious and mature thought in connection with obsolete Acts of Parliament, it

is to be found in the Administration Act for the transmission of wealth. There is no more glaring instance of stupid inconsistency and utter ignorance than the transmission of money under this Act. I believe that no person has the right to transmit wealth to another unless that person is directly or indirectly dependent upon the other individual. Some time ago there was a case in which money was to be transmitted to an individual, and it took five or six years to find a dependant to claim the money. That person was ultimately found in Scotland.

Mr J. Thomson: The best place to find him too.

Mr Lambert: Hon. members should realise that in the present state of our mineral development and apparently the member for West Perth calls upon our conception of what is right and wrong—the whole idea governing the transmission of wealth and, side by side, the transmission of poverty, requires overhauling. Today it is looked upon as a fine thing to inherit wealth; it is looked upon as contemptible to inherit poverty. The one cannot be inherited without the other. If it is said that a man is to be allowed to accumulate and transmit wealth, it must be said equally that he will be allowed to accumulate poverty and to transmit it. Under our social system to-day, that is what is happening. The Premier may be looking for wealthy men about Perth to-day, hoping for the time when he may reduce the deficit by large amounts in probate duties. I think the field I have suggested is a just one for investigation as a source of revenue. I hope hon. Members will realise that there is a just claim for their support for the Bill. At the same time, I trust that they will realise that they are dealing with a dangerous thing when they open up the consideration of the principle of wealth transmission. They must remember that besides the transmission of wealth, we have the transmission of poverty.

Mr UNDERWOOD: I will not have any trouble with mine.

Mr LAMBERT: As a matter of fact, if the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) were suffering from a little wealth of knowledge, we would appreciate it. I hope the Premier or some other reformer will lay down the principle upon which wealth shall be transmitted and the principle upon which property shall not be transmitted.

Mr Underwood: I will not have any trouble with mine.

Mr Lambert: Social reformers to-day can talk of socialism, syndicalism, or any other "ism", but, getting down to bedrock, there is this difficulty to which I have referred regarding the transmission of wealth or poverty.

Mr Underwood: You cannot transmit poverty.

Mr Angelo: It is with us always.

Mr Simons: No one disputes the possession of poverty.

Mr Lambert: The member for Pilbara has probably been influenced in his attitude towards the Bill and in the more charitable state of mind he has displayed, by his friendliness with the member for West Perth. Last night we witnessed his hostility to a speech which elevated this House by reason of the high ideals the speaker dealt with. I anticipate, Mr Deputy Speaker, your objection that I am straying from the path, but I crave your indulgence.

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the hon. Member will speak to the Bill.

Mr Lambert: What a striking difference was presented by the attitude of the hon. Member to-night towards this Bill, when without reason or explanation he gave it his full endorsement. His attitude would have been very different had it been the Licensing Bill. I hope the Administration Act will have a proper overhaul. To-day it is laid down that a person dying and transmitting wealth shall pay a certain percentage, irrespective of whether his money is joint to a 42nd cousin or to a deserving wife and child. The Administration Act is a farce, and the sooner we review it the better. I hope hon. Members will support this Bill and that, later on, the Government will bring down a more comprehensive amendment.

The Premier (Hon Sir James Mitchell - Northam) [9.47]: The Bill constitutes a perfectly fair proposal. The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) said that a man and his wife should be equal. I think the wife should be regarded as being very much superior.

Mr Underwood: You are smoodging now.

The Premier: I know that if it be a matter of control in the family, the wife is superior. I have experienced it. In every walk of life women are more than holding their own.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Do not give yourself away too much.

The Premier: Of course we cannot object to that, since we have made it possible. Probably this is the first Bill ever introduced by a woman in any British Parliament. I congratulate the member for West Perth on the reception her Bill has had in the Chamber. No measure was ever more generally approved. If only I could get my Bills as warmly accepted by the House, I would have a very much easier time. I readily support the Bill.

Mr Latham (York) [9.50]: It is proposed to distribute the estate equally between the father and the mother. Whereas most women know how to look after money, I have heard of instances of the father being a good-for nothing sort, and probably there are other instances in which it is the women who is at fault. Under the Bill the mother is to have half the estate. I remind members that after she has spent the whole of her share she will still have in common law a claim against her husband for maintenance.

Mr Underwood: The old man ought to be able to stand it.

Mr Latham: No doubt he will be. Nevertheless the point ought to be thoroughly investigated. I do not know what was the intention of the member for West Perth in not carrying the subsection of the Victorian Act through to its end. When in Committee I will move to amend that clause in that direction. It is only right that in the event of the estate being a big one a maximum should be placed on the amount which the mother may claim. In other respects I support the Bill.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth - in reply) [9.53]: In answer to the member for Coolgardie (Mr Lambert) let me say I am not asking for the transmission of poverty, but rather in some cases to lessen poverty. I welcome the suggestion that the Administration Act should be thoroughly overhauled; it would be to the benefit of women. However, I was anxious to avoid bringing into the Bill any controversial matter. The Bill is not intended as a reflection on the member for Coolgardie or any other member. It appeared to me better not to suggest that they should have brought down some such measure long ago. Like the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W.C. Angwin), I could give from my own experience instances of great injustice wrought through lack of this provision. However, I thought it wise to avoid controversial issues. Because of that, I am sorry the member for York (Mr Latham) proposes to move an amendment. For it will then be necessary in order to make it equal, to put the father in a position which under the Victorian Act he does not occupy. To avoid doing that, I purposely left out that provision about £500 only going to the mother; because, if the widowed mother is to be limited to the inheritance of a certain sum, why should not the father be limited in like manner, and the balance divided amongst the children in both cases? I think the Bill is quite equitable, and so I hope the member for York's forecasted amendment will not be agreed to.

Question put and passed.
Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr Stubbs in the Chair; Mrs Cowan in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.
Clause 2—Next-of-kin of intestate without issue to include mother:

Mr Latham: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr Latham: I move an amendment—

That after "father" in line 1 of paragraph (b) "and the net value of his or her estate does not exceed £500" be inserted.

The Colonial Secretary: The amendment will spoil the spirit of the Bill. There is no justification for limiting the amount the mother might receive.

Mr Underwood: Give the mover a chance to state the justification.

Mr Latham: If an estate were worth £20,000 the mother would get the whole of it. There might be invalid brothers or sisters who, if the mother married again, would not obtain one penny piece. If the estate were under £500, it would be fair and reasonable for the mother to get it absolutely. Victoria has a similar provision in its Act of 1916.

Mrs COWAN: You are handing it to the man and not to the woman.

Mr Money: The amendment is not so simple as it appears to be. Paragraph (a) provides that whatever would go to the father, whether whole or part, must be divided equally between the father and mother. Paragraph (b), however, takes it away from the other next of kin who might be invalid brothers and sisters.

Mrs COWAN: No.

Mr Money: It does.

Mrs COWAN: The Act already provides that the father may take the whole to the exclusion of the children. Why not the mother?

Mr Money: This amendment really affects the old statute of distribution dating back to King Charles. There is nothing in the Administration Act dealing with this matter. The Committee have no desire to exclude next of kin such as brothers and sisters, but that is the effect of the amendment.

Progress reported.

IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 28 September 1922

Hansard pp.937-939.

Resumed from the 7th September; Mr Stubbs in the Chair: Mrs Cowan in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Next of kin of intestate without issue to include mother:

Mr Latham had moved the following amendment:—After "father", in line 1 of paragraph (b), insert "where the net value of his or her estate does not exceed five hundred pounds."

Mr Latham: At the present time if a father is deceased and one of the children dies intestate, the mother shares equally with the rest of the family. Under this clause, if the mother married again, the whole of the estate would pass to her and out of the family. The object of the amendment is to limit the amount. If the amount does not exceed £500 it is only reasonable that the mother should share equally with the brothers and sisters of the deceased. I disapprove of a private member introducing a measure of this description. All such amending Bills should be submitted to the Crown Law authorities for report to a responsible Minister. This Bill might easily have been rushed through Committee without discussion. Paragraph (a) makes a great alteration. At present the father would get the whole of the estate absolutely, but it is now intended to remove any chance of the Money being retained for the particular family to which it rightly belongs. There is nothing unreasonable in the amendment.

Mr Money: In nine cases out of ten when a child dies and leaves property, that property would have been given to the child by its father. The object of the gift having failed, the intention probably was that the gift should revert to the donor. It is questionable whether we should make an innovation in favour of the mother. The statute of distribution was altered to some extent by the Act, inasmuch as in the case of an estate under £500 the wife or husband took the whole of it to the exclusion of the rest of the family. Victoria made an innovation on the lines of the amendment of the member for York. The Victorian Act provides that where the estate amounts to £500 or less, in the event of the person dying without wife or father, the whole of the estate shall go to the mother. I see no reason for objecting to that, but when dealing with estates in excess of £500, we have to look to many possibilities. It is quite likely that a mother might marry again.

Mr Latham: Or she might be already married.

Mrs COWAN: What about the father!

Mr Money: A big fortune might go to the mother and not a farthing of it to the sisters or brothers of the deceased. A mother might marry again and come under the influence of her second husband the whole fortune would go with her, notwithstanding that the family had probably contributed largely to accumulating the fortune. The amendment will be a sufficient innovation to the principle. Assume that the amendment is carried and that there is a family of three and an estate of £9,500. The mother would take £700 and then share with the rest. I am satisfied that the family as a family should have a more equal distribution than the suggestion that has been put before us in the Bill that the mother should have the whole of the wealth to the exclusion of the remainder of the family. That would not be fair to the family generally. I am prepared to support the amendment of the member for York.

Mrs COWAN: The member for York contended that the opinions of the responsible advisers of the Crown should be obtained on a Bill of this description.

Mr Latham: I said it should be submitted to Ministers.

Mrs COWAN: Instead of worrying Ministers with a matter of this kind, I preferred to get the opinion of the Crown Solicitor and the opinions of other authorities as well. The Crown Solicitor writes that the Bill is perfectly in order, and in answer to my inquiry he has this to say—

The Statute of Distributions, enacted in the reign of Charles II., has been amended as regards the property of a husband or wife dying intestate, not only by our own Administration Act, 1903, but wherever the statute is in force. The Bill under consideration deals with the distribution of the property of a child dying intestate and unmarried in the lifetime of his father and mother, or in the lifetime of a mother where the father is already dead. Under the Act of Charles II the father takes the whole because at the time the Act was passed a married woman was incapable of acquiring property. In the words of Macqueen, in his treatise on "the rights and liabilities of husband and wife" (3rd edition, page 284) "The disabilities of marriage entirely precluded the wife from the enjoyment of property; whatever belonged to her while single, or came to her while married, passed absolutely to the husband. What was hers became his and what was his remained his own. She could possess nothing; she could bequeath nothing at her death. Such were the rigid maxims of the English marriage law."

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, for those happy days!

Mr Latham: Who is the author of the story?

Mrs COWAN: The Crown Solicitor goes on to write—

And as stated in Eversley on "The law of domestic relations," at page 2 of the preface—"The wife was deemed but little more than a personal chattel of the husband." But now that a married woman is capable of acquiring property in her own right, the property of a child dying intestate and unmarried, leaving a father and mother, should be divided between them as provided in paragraph (a) of the Bill. Paragraph (b) provides for the ease of a mother when the father of a child dying intestate and unmarried as dead. Under the law as it stands, the father takes the whole if the mother is dead; but the mother (the father being dead) has to share the property of her deceased child with the next of kin, each taking an equal share. If it is thought right that the next of kin should participate with the mother, then, it seems to me, it would be equally right that the next of kin should participate with the mother then, it seems to me, it would be equally right that the next of kin should participate with the father, where a child dies intestate and unmarried. I can see no reason for the distinction between a father and a mother in these circumstances.

I think the father and mother are the right people to inherit the property of the child who has died and has neglected to make a will. Most children would prefer that the property should go to the mother. Any chivalrous, nice-mannered man would wish this to be so. The mother is responsible for bringing the child into the world and nurturing that child. Who are those who think that we should keep to the days of the old statutes of Charles II., the king who was so wonderful that it is said of him, "he never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one." The English law has been brought up to date. We find that only last year a Bill was submitted to the British Parliament known as Lord Birkenhead's Bill. Clause 148, paragraphs 4 and 5, are in the terms of the Bill I have submitted to this House. This therefore should be a sufficient answer to the amendment of the member for York. If the British Parliament thinks that such legislation is good enough, then it should be good enough for this Parliament to adopt. I know of no reason why we should be behind the British Parliament. The hon. Member wishes us to do a thing which is nothing less than a retrograde step. On the subject of Lord Birkenhead's bill the Crown Solicitor writes—

The amendments of the law where a child dies intestate, leaving parents surviving, or one parent (mother or father) surviving, are also set out in the memorandum annexed to the Imperial measure.

Paragraph 4 of the Imperial statute sets out—

If the intestate leaves both parents, but no issue, then subject to the interest of a surviving husband or wife, the residuary estate of the intestate shall belong to the father and mother in equal shares absolutely.

Paragraph 5 states—

If the intestate leaves one parent only but no issue then, subject to the interests of the surviving husband or wife, the residuary estate of the intestate shall belong to the surviving father or mother absolutely.

I am only asking hon. Members to do what is right. I have other legal opinion on that subject. One I obtained from my own son, who says that the Bill is perfectly in order and who adds—

The mere fact that the amendment proposed by the Administration Act Amendment Bill, 1922, will further alter the Statutes of Distribution is not in any way an objection in law to such an amendment being made, should the Legislative Assembly approve of the same. Should the Legislative Assembly choose to repeal the Statute of Distribution in *toto* so far as this State is concerned, it is at liberty to do so, as such legislation is of a purely domestic nature.

That point was raised on the last occasion.
The opinion goes on—

The justice of the proposed amendment is so obvious that it seems difficult to understand the point of view of this objecting to it.

Mr Nicholson, a member of another place, who has agreed to take charge of this Bill when it reaches the Legislative Council, expresses this opinion—

If the intestate dies leaving no issue surviving, but leaving a widow, and say father, mother, brothers and sisters, the widow in such a case gets in the first place £500 allowed under the Administration Act 1903, and the balance of the estate after deduction of debts, etc., is apportioned as to one half to the widow and the remaining half to the father. Note the mother and brothers and sisters do not participate in such a case.

If, however, the intestate left no widow or issue him surviving, but leaving a father, mother, etc., then in such a case the whole estate goes to the father. The mother gets no share. This clearly is an inequality and injustice which should be remedied, and I am glad to learn from Mrs Cowan that a proposal is on foot to remedy this injustice.

In the State of Victoria, the unfair position in which a mother was placed has been recognised and an Act known as the Intestate Estates Distribution Act, 1916, is now in force there and alters the law whereby a father is entitled to the whole of the property of his children dying intestate and unmarried or dying without leaving a widow or issue surviving.

The Victorian Act provides that the father and mother should share equally in the case where no issue survives. This is only fair and equitable. In the case where the intestate leaves a mother surviving but no wife, husband, issue, or father, and where the net value of the estate does not exceed £500, then the whole of the estate belongs to the mother.

Sir Walter James, K.C., expresses himself thus—

The Administration Act, 1903, does modify the Statute of Distributions, and as your Bill seeks to make further alterations to that statute I cannot see how any technical objection can be raised to it.

I should think – with respect – that the House can deal with your Bill on its merits without infringing any of its Standing Orders, and without the least fear that when passed the Bill would be prejudiced by any over-riding legislation.

Many others competent to speak support my proposal. I hope the amendment will not be passed.

Hon. T. Walker: There is no question about the Bill being in order. In England there has been embodied in the legislation all that the member for West Perth is now asking for. IN our own laws real property does not now descend in the way that it did. It has become included amongst personal property, and its value is always considered in distribution. We have, therefore, radically departed from the Statute of Distribution. We also make wills for those who die without having made one. In fact, the intestate has a will already made for him. Under our Administration Act we place the man and the woman on a footing of strict equality. If the wife dies intestate, the husband gets £500 and the balance is distributed. If the husband dies, the wife takes £500, and so on. If a son or a daughter having property dies without issue and the father and mother are alive, they take even shares. If the father is dead, the mother takes it. The Bill is getting away from the old moorings where in the estimation of the law a woman had no soul. She could not hold any property until the Married Women's Property Act was passed. This Bill only follows along the lines of that Act. It declares that a woman in that sphere has a right to the possession of property and to absolute control of it, irrespective of whether she marries again or not. At present the father can take it all, but why should not the mother have the same privilege?

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Because she is more likely to be influenced, if she marries again, than the father.

Hon. T. Walker: Not at all. If it is required to safeguard property in the interests of the children, it cannot be placed in better hands than those of the mother. If there is one distinguishing feature that lifts woman above the ordinary level of man it is her love for her children.

WOMEN'S LEGAL STATUS BILL

Edith Cowan successfully moved for the passage of a Private Member's Bill to remove women's disqualifications for entry into the legal and other professions.

WOMEN'S LEGAL STATUS BILL

Second Reading

Legislative Assembly, September 1923

Hansard pp.592-594.

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth): In moving the second reading said: I am bringing forward this Bill at the instance of the women of the community through their various organisations. We are desirous of having women put on a reasonably fair footing in point of holding offices and positions now closed to them. The Bill amends the law in respect of women's disqualifications. Probably I shall be told that the Interpretation Act would meet all our difficulties. But so far from its doing that, every time women desire admittance to any further professions or posts, some special Bill has to be brought in to amend the Interpretation Act. If the Bill before us is passed, we shall not have to be continually coming to Parliament in order that women may be admitted to various functions and offices from which they are now debarred. Similar legislation has been passed in Great Britain and in New South Wales. In other parts of the world also women are admitted to many professions and avenues of employment not open to them in this State. For instance, everybody thought our Interpretation Act covered equal citizenship, really a matter enabling women to sit in Parliament. It was thought the Interpretation Act would have sufficed, because it is there prescribed that the masculine gender includes the feminine gender. Yet to enable women to sit in this Parliament you had to amend the Act, making it clear that the word "person" included female as well as male. For instance, we feel it is desirable that women should be admitted as barristers. There is nothing in the Barristers' Act to prevent it, but when application was made to admit a woman the judges held that the Act did not originally intend that women should be admitted. We were told by Judge Parker that if the Legislature desired that a woman should be capable of being admitted as a practitioner of the court, or indeed if the Legislature desired that a woman should be capable of being admitted as a practitioner of the court, or indeed if the Legislature intended to make women eligible for admission to the court, they should have said so in express language as, he believed, had been done in New Zealand.

Mr Davies: In what year was that?

Mrs. COWAN: In 1904. We have passed a further amendment of the Interpretation Act since then. It is practically in exactly the same words as those of the original Act in point of whether the phrase "masculine gender" includes "feminine gender". On the same occasion Judge McMillan said—

If a change is to be made, as if for the future women are to be eligible for admission to the Bench as well as to the Bar because it seems to me if they are entitled to become members of the Bar they are eligible to sit on this Bench—the change is of such importance that it should be made, and in fact can only be made, by the Legislature.

Judge Burnside said—

That is a negative statute. It says it shall not be lawful for any person to act as agent or practitioner in the court without first having obtained the certificate of the Commissioner of the Court.

Again the Judge said—

There is nothing there conferring a right on women to be admitted as solicitors.

He went on to say he had been unable to find any instances under the common law of the United States, which is based on the common law of England, or any instance in England or any British speaking colony, where the right of women to be admitted to the Bar had ever been suggested. The learned judge added—

It is not a common law right. It is a privilege which has been conferred by the courts originally, and then been regulated subsequently by statute almost from time immemorial, and which has been confined to the male sex. I agree with what has been said by my learned brothers, and I am not prepared to start making law. When the Legislature in its wisdom confers the right on women, then we shall be pleased to admit them.

I have noted these opinions merely to show the necessity for the Bill. In South Australia a little while ago it was found necessary to bring in a special Bill to interpret their law. They admitted women to be barristers in 1911, yet had to amend that Act to allow women being made public notaries. That only shows what a difficult thing law is, and how necessary it is to have some definite provision given women the proper legal status.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You want a Bill that people can understand.

Mrs. COWAN: Yes, if possible.

Mr Marshall: You will be cutting all the solicitors and barristers out of their jobs.

Mrs. COWAN: In answer to that, it is another case of letting "justice be done though the heavens fall." Women will never get these positions while men wish to keep them out.

Mr Latham: Surely you do not want generally to bring women down to the level of men?

Mrs. COWAN: No, I want to raise men to the level of women. That may be possible. I am not asking for anything that has not been done in other countries. Women in other countries have been treated with the greatest consideration and admitted to all these different professions without any great difficulty, and it is somewhat surprising to note the countries have done justice to women in many ways.

Mr Davies: Do you think it fair that a married woman should hold an hotel license?

Mrs. COWAN: Yes, even that, should she so wish, if her husband is not able to keep her. There are plenty of women whose husbands have not been able to keep them, and it may be well if women can enter the higher professions and earn a good living when their husbands have been unable to earn it for them. America has women judges in the children's court, and why not have them here? Why not have them to deal with women's avocations when they apply to the Arbitration Court? I fail to see any anomaly in permitting women to hold these positions, or even in making them Ministers of the Crown. It is not long since we had the curious and amusing anomaly, in New South Wales, I think, of a man being appointed Minister for Motherhood. I do not know what he could possibly know about motherhood, or what sort of judge on those questions he was expected to be. I think it would be better to have women in the Parliament and; if there was to be a post to deal with mothers, it should be given to a woman, preferably to one who was a mother. This goes to show how necessary it is to have some sort of equality in the matter.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Generally those women who possess the greatest qualifications have never been mothers.

Mrs. COWAN: Not necessarily. I do not want Western Australia to lag behind the other countries. Women are admitted to the bar in almost every State of Australia, namely, Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia and I am asking the House amongst other things, to make it possible for them to be admitted here. In America, Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Argentine and India also, women are admitted to the bar. I do not wish my

country to be behind those countries; nor do I wish our men to be considered less chivalrous or less ready to look up to their sisters, mothers and aunts than men anywhere else. It should be necessary only to bring this matter under the notice of members to make them realise the absolute justice of my request. In Denmark women are magistrates, jurors, barristers, judges and police; in Canada they are notaries and barristers. In the Crimea and Czecho-Slovakia a woman is vice-president of the Diet, and women may be members. In Czecho-Slovakia there are 13 women in the House of Representatives, and three in the Senate. Dr Ella C. Potter, of Philadelphia, is Commissioner of Public Welfare and a member of the Cabinet of the Governor of Pennsylvania. Mrs C. Bennett Smith, of Buffalo, is President of the Civil Service Commission. I wonder what would be said if it were suggested that a woman be Civil Service Commissioner. Everyone would get a shock, but I do not know that the result would be less satisfactory than when the office is filled by a man.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A lot of young women are employed in the civil service.

Mrs. COWAN: And the service is none the worse for that. Dame Anderson, MA, is the principal inspector of factories in Great Britain and has held that position for 30 years. The Minister for Education in British Columbia is a woman. In Munich there are women jurors, and women are admitted to practice in courts Nos. 1 and 2, and also in the High Court. Then we have doctors *honoris causa*, a high academical degree, allowed to women in the University of Berlin. The first lady to get this degree received it on her 70th birthday. I do not know that I could succeed in getting such a degree on my 70th birthday, but it is nice to know that it is possible. Of course, one does not know what can be done until one tries. Women are magistrates and jurors in Dresden. In Ohio, Miss F E Allen donned the black robes of high judicial office and ascended the bench of the Ohio Supreme Court. She is the first woman to be elected a common pleas judge in the United States and the first to be elected to a court of last resort. I have quoted a very fair list that should make members realise they owe something to the women here who might very well be given the privilege, or rather the right, and the common justice of competing and standing side by side with their brothers wherever it is possible to do so. We must have wider avenues of employment for our women because the men are not marrying.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of them say that is due to women taking their jobs.

Mrs. COWAN: I know there are members of this House who, if Perth were a Mormon city, would be only too pleased to help us remedy that position. But we do not all desire that. What we do want is the possibility of standing side by side with our men and getting admission to all these different professions, entrance to which will carry further admission to the higher professions. We are ready to face the responsibilities, but we cannot expect to attain our goal unless the whole community are willing to see us there. I see no reason why it should not be possible to win the approval of the community.

The Minister for Works: Do not rush in where angels fear to tread.

Mrs. COWAN: In the first place I asked the Solicitor General to frame a Bill that would make it possible for women to be admitted as barristers, but on going into the matter more thoroughly, I concluded it would be better to ask for the wider privileges set out in my Bill. He advised me that the inclusion of part of the English Act would clear away any ambiguity for the future, and therefore I thought it only right to bring this Bill forward. I hope members will regard this request seriously. The women are very desirous, as also are many married men, of their being placed on absolutely equal terms with the men, leaving it to be a matter of the survival of the fittest. We ask for neither more nor less than that, and I hope members will favourably consider the Bill and pass it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

7 November 1923, *Hansard* pp. 1380-1382

Mrs. COWAN: (West Perth—in reply) [8.30]: I am sorry that some members imagine that I or any other woman would wish to introduce legislation to deprive women of the protective measures given to them for racial reasons.

Mr Mullany: The Bill is doing it.

Mrs. COWAN: For fear that might be the position, as when suggested by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W C Angwin), I waited upon the Solicitor General and discussed the matter with him. This is his opinion—

The Bill, which removes certain disqualifications on account of sex, in no way affects the provisions of other Acts, such as the Factories and Shops Act, enacted in the interests of women and girls and for their protection. The Bill, as you are aware, adopts the Imperial Acts 9 and 10, Geo. V., C.71. and the New South Wales Act of 1919. It has never been suggested in England or New South Wales that the removal of these disqualifications would be to prejudice women in other directions. The Factory Acts, for instance, in England and New South Wales, contain provisions for the protection of women and young persons, just as in our Acts, which are wholly unaffected by the removal of sex disqualification.

The Solicitor General says he sees no reason why I should not proceed with the Bill.

Mc McCallum: I would not rely on his opinion too much.

Mrs. COWAN: I will not object to an amendment such as the member for North-East Fremantle suggested. No woman would wish for anything that would harm any member of her sex. If we made it possible for women to work in lead factories, we would harm our race, and no one desires to do that. Something has been said about the position of married women. The suggestion that disqualifications should apply to them is a mistake, for many reasons. I know of no reason why married women should not be allowed to teach in our schools. Surely a married woman is the very best person to do so when her children have reached a reasonable age.

Mr Davies: Married women are not prevented from teaching today.

Mrs. COWAN: Yes, they are.

The Minister for Mines: They are not.

Mr Davies: There are plenty of married women who are teaching. I know of many cases.

Mrs. COWAN: They are not allowed to teach unless they are widows. They have to resign if they get married.

The Minister for Mines: I can give you two instances where married women are teaching, and the husbands stay at home to do the housework!

Mrs. COWAN: If they are not men enough to go out and earn a living for their families, do you blame the women for doing it?

The Minister for Mines: No, I am envious of them.

Mrs. COWAN: Women are allowed to work at various vocations. For instance, nursing, teaching, housekeeping, acting and gardening are vocations and we would not think of debarring women from participating in them, whether they be married or single. If a woman is able, and it is

necessary to augment the family income, she should be permitted to do so. I have not heard anyone suggest the necessity for a law to prohibit women, when the necessity arises, from going out charring or washing or doing any other unpleasant work. No one has suggested that should be disallowed.

Mr Latham: You would not suggest that the men should do that work?

Mrs. COWAN: Why not? They are as capable as we are.

Mr McCallum: What about the Factories and Shops Act, and the Mines Regulation Act?

Mrs. COWAN: That does not prevent women from going out washing.

Mr McCallum: It prevents them from engaging in some objectionable avocations.

Mrs. COWAN: The hon. member talked about certain Acts which seek to protect the interests of women, but no one desires to interfere with them.

Mr McCallum: But the Bill does so.

Mrs. COWAN: No one would say that a woman should not be prevented from working for six weeks before or after the birth of a child. No attempt is made in the Bill to interfere with that. While such a legislative provision does exist, why has no one attempted to provide that if she stops at home during the trying period she passes through at that time there should be monetary provision to show of it?

Mr McCallum: Only the trades unions have attempted to do anything in that direction.

Mrs. COWAN: That is not so. Women should receive better consideration in those circumstances, and we have not got it.

Mr Cunningham: You will not get it from your side of the House.

Mrs. COWAN: It is a great mistake to say that.

Mr Hughes: Your Party control the Government; why do you not so something?

Mrs. COWAN: When a family has grown up, why should the wife not be permitted to go out and do something? Women get very lonely when their husbands are away all the time. I do not wish to indulge in mutual recriminations on the subject, but I was sorry to hear the member for Mt Magnet (Hon. M F Troy) speak as he did. After all, it is not altogether the fault of women and girls that they have to go out to work. The fact is that no man can keep a family of four or five girls going unless he is wealthy. In such circumstances, the girls have to do something to maintain themselves. Unless we open various vocations to enable those girls to earn their living, they cannot be kept at home because, under existing conditions, those very things which would keep them at home have been removed outside for commercial reasons. That is one reason why I ask for the passage of the Bill. I want to know why we do not object to women washing and charring?

Mr Latham: You do not expect a man to do that sort of thing?

Mrs. COWAN: There is a great deal of truth in what Havelock Ellis said when he referred to the curious point of view we hold regarding the opposite sex. He said—

It is perhaps not strange that the uncertainty of knowing whether she was a goddess, or a house-servant, or something in between, should have stricken women so long with a kind of paralysis.

Women are recovering from that state of paralysis, and are asking for these various things now. That paralysis is at an end, and women are realising that they must be out and alongside their

menfolk. It will take some time for the menfolk to get used to it, and it is rather hard for them at the start. Wise women will see that it is done as tactfully as possible, and men need not be afraid.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Women do not want to go on juries now.

Mrs. COWAN: Yes, they do, in cases where women and children are concerned. Havelock Ellis also said—

We may regard all discussion on the everlasting alleged inferiority of women as absolutely futile and foolish, and also that the conviction of some men that women are not fitted to exercise various social and political duties, and the conviction of some women that men are a morally inferior sex, are both alike absurd, for they both rest on the assumption that women do not inherit from their fathers, nor men from their mothers. We are not at liberty to introduce any artificial sex barrier into social concerns, for the hope of our future civilisation lies in the development in equal freedom of both masculine and feminine elements in life.

We must work together and be side by side.

Mr J Thomson: Who wrote that?

Mrs. COWAN: Those are the words of Havelock Ellis, the noted writer on sociological topics.

Mr J Thomson: I do not know him.

Mrs. COWAN: The hon. member should know all of these writers. Havelock Ellis is a famous scientist.

Mr J Thomson: I do not know him, and I do not want to know him.

Mrs. COWAN: I trust hon. members will agree to the second reading of the Bill, and that women will be admitted to the various vocations where they can gain a footing. I trust they will occupy a better position in time to come.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 5 December 1923
Hansard pp. 1382-11383.

Mr Angelo in the Chair: Mrs Cowan in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Removal of disqualification on grounds of success [sic].

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No doubt the Solicitor General was right when he said the Bill did not actually repeal any other Act. I have looked up the English Act, from which the Bill is taken, and find that the list of Acts affected is set out in the schedule. The Bill is almost word for word with the first portion of the English Act which, however, contains four clauses, one of which has a number of paragraphs. One of the objects of the English Act was to permit women to serve on juries. There is special provision setting out how juries are to be called.

Mrs. COWAN: I will not ask for any provision regarding women sitting on juries.

The Minister for Mines: Women do not want to take that responsibility, but they wish to be admitted to the bar.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I know that women do not want to act on juries.

Mrs. COWAN: I think they do.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The hon. member does not know the views of her own sex! They do not want to sit on juries. For that matter, men do not wish to go on juries either.

Mrs. COWAN: In any case, I do not ask for that provision.

Mc McCallum: But the Bill brings in everything.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The English Act was assented to on the 23rd December, 1919, and it is similar to the Bill before us in regard to the first section. The Bill will repeal other Acts passed for the protection of women.

Mrs. COWAN: No, that is not altogether desired.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But it repeals everything.

Hon. P. Collier: You are embracing everything under your Bill.

Mrs. COWAN: No, I am not.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The English Act repeals portions of the following Acts:

The Juries Act, 1870; the Juries Act (Ireland), 1871; the Local Government Act, 1894; the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1894; the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898; the Qualification of Women (County and Borough Councils) Act, 1907; the Qualification of Women (County Town Councils) (Scotland) Act, 1907; the Local Authorities (Ireland) (Qualification of Women) Act, 1911; the County and Borough Councils (Qualification) Act, 1914; and the County, Town and Parish Councils (Qualification) (Scotland) Act 1914. All the other Acts not repealed do stand. Therefore

the Solicitor General was correct. I am confident a majority of the women do not want to serve on juries. Perhaps half a dozen do.

The Minister for Mines: We could name them, too.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I could name some of them. Women generally have not expressed any wish to serve on juries. How would it be possible for a majority of women to leave their families and serve on juries perhaps for a week?

Hon. P. Collier: If they were summoned they would have to serve.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: To include the words "or marriage" would have the effect of taking mothers away from their children. My wife would not go; she would rather pay the fine. She is opposed to women getting these powers, and there are thousands of others holding similar views. Those asking for these powers number perhaps a dozen in Perth and the country.

Hon. P. Collier: None in the country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There will be no choice; they will be compelled to serve on juries, and I am sure the women would resent such a provision. The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) should confine the Bill to what she definitely desires. If she wishes to make provision for women to enter the legal profession, she should stipulate it.

Mrs. COWAN: The Solicitor General tells me that does not apply.

Hon. T. WALKER: The amendment might well be accepted as a preliminary to a more drastic amendment. The word "sex" covers both married and single women. The New South Wales Act provided that a person shall not by reason of sex be deemed to be under any disability or subject to any disqualification. That covers all women. Therefore it is not necessary to include the words "or marriage". In England there are special reasons for including these words. Marriage does carry certain disqualifications as to occupying a position or exercising power under the English law. We have got rid of those, so we need not retain the words. Marriage does carry certain disqualifications as to occupying a position or exercising power under the English law. We have got rid of those, so we need not retain the words in this clause. Evidently there has been too much hasty copying of the English statute. The clause shows the evil of copying. When an Act specially repeals other Acts only those mentioned are affected. The Acts not mentioned still operate. The concluding phrase of Clause 2 is taken from New South Wales for this clause. She should state definitely what she desires, and leave untouched what she wishes to preserve. Then there could be no doubt as to how other matters will be affected.

Mrs Cowan: I do not object to adopting the New South Wales section.

Hon. T. Walker: It would be better to report progress in order that the matter might be carefully considered.

Progress reported.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION-CLOSE OF SESSION

Legislative Assembly 29 November 1923

Hansard p. 1732

Mrs Cowan: I rose before the Premier, but you did not permit me to speak. I wished to ask a question.

Mr SPEAKER: If the member for West Perth rose before the Premier replied, I did not see her. If she desires to ask a question I will permit her to do so.

Mrs COWAN: Will the Premier see that an opportunity is given for the consideration of the Women's Legal Status Bill so that it may be sent to another place and dealt with before the end of the session?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 5 December 1923
Hansard p. 1843.

Resumed from the 7 the November. Mr Angelo in the Chair; Mrs Cowan in Charge of the Bill.

Clause 2-Removal of disqualification on grounds of sex:

Hon. W.C. Angwin had moved to strike out of line 1 the words "or marriage".

Amendment put and passed.

Mrs Cowan: I move an amendment-

That in line 7 the words "civil" and "or vocation" be struck out.

I do not wish to convey the impression or make it possible that there shall be anything detrimental to the interests of women under this measure. The Solicitor General contends that the amendment is unnecessary, but I have decided that it would be better to make sure by deleting the words mentioned.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title-agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE MEASURES DEBATE PARTICIPATION

(Alphabetical)

**Anzac Day Bill
Closer Settlement Bill, 1921
Closer Settlement Bill(No. 2) 1922
Courts of Session Bill
Criminal Code Amendment Bill
Electoral Districts Bill
Factories and Shops Act Amendment Bill
Health Act Amendment Bill
Hospitals Bill
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment Bill
Inspection of Machinery Bill
Licensing Act Amendment Bill (1921)
Licensing Act Amendment Bill (1922)
Nurses' Registration Bill
Pensioner's Rate (Rate Exemption Bill)
Perpetual Executors, Trustees and Agency Co.(Private) Bill
Public Works Committee Bill
Redistribution of Seats Bill
State Children's Act Amendment Bill
Western Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Ltd Amendment
(Private) Bill
Wheat Marketing Bill**

ANZAC DAY BILL

Edith Cowan supported an amendment to the ANZAC Day Act to ban race meetings and the opening of hotels on that day.

ANZAC DAY BILL IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 21 November 1923

Hansard p. 1561.

Mrs COWAN: I support the amendment. We cannot pay too high a tribute to our soldiers who have passed on, or too great a respect to their memory in every way. Many mothers and other women relatives have had their hearts wrung by what has occurred on Anzac Day. They do not take the view that people are willfully disregarding it, but that they forget. The only way to make them remember is to put something upon our statute-book that will constitute an ideal for the future. I have always felt it to be a good thing if sometimes the statutes are a little ahead of the ideals for them to live up to. If they break the law it cannot be helped, but it is there for them to follow. Those who come after, when we have all passed away, will realise in a more definite way than they come otherwise do what this meant to the nation in our day, and to the fathers and mothers from whom our soldiers sprang. They will know that we did realise the extent of the sacrifice, and did our best to leave behind us something that would be a mark for all time to cause people to realise the wonderful work that was done by our soldiers for the whole world during the dreadful ordeal of war. That is why I support the amendment. I want this law made by law so sacred a day that the people will never forget it.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT BILL 1921

Edith Cowan was very supportive of legislative measures to ensure the success of the group settlement scheme in the State's South West region.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 8 December 1921

Hansard p. 2266.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [10.2]: Unlike the previous speaker, I wish to warmly congratulate the Premier on having introduced this Bill.

Mr Lutey: I expected that of you.

Mrs COWAN: It is certainly a step in the right direction, and one which I think will give great satisfaction to the community at large. During the course of the election campaign, we heard a lot regarding the necessity for doing something in the way of taxing unimproved values. When we realise that this Bill will make it possible, without inflicting too great a hardship in different directions, to bring into use the land available in the South-West —

Mr Munsie: But it will not do that.

Mrs COWAN: And more particularly the land which is available in the districts between York and Beverley on the west, extending in an easterly direction to Dowerin, and then to Cunderdin and Quairading where according to the latest report of the Surveyor General, there are two and a half million acres within seven miles of a railway, the Premier has shown great courage in introducing the measure. For this he deserves the heartiest support of the House, and any support I can give him I certainly intend to give.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT BILL 1922

Edith Cowan continued to strongly endorse the Government's group settlement scheme in the State's South West region.

CLOSER SETTLEMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 13 September 1922
Hansard pp. 725-726.

Mrs. COWAN: (West Perth) [5.46]: I am prepared to support the Bill. Although it does not go far enough, I think it is the beginning of what we need very badly. Last year we thought we were going to accomplish something in this direction, but we did nothing —

The Premier: We did.

Mrs. COWAN: Because it was not passed in another place. We hope that this Bill will be put into such a form by the amendments which will be submitted in Committee that it will be passed, and that it will mark the beginning of the acquisition of these unused lands. Two years ago we had a report by men who were surveying land and who saw the use to which it was being put and were in a position to form some idea of its quality. If anyone was in a position to judge of the quality of land, surely such men would be. They reported that there was 2½ million acres situated seven miles from existing railways between York and Beverley on the west and going east to Dowerin, Cunderdin and Quairading and that only one million acres of that was developed in an agricultural sense. I am glad to know that the Premier has recognised this, because he proposes to devote three millions of the money which is to come for work in the Wheat Belt. The three millions is to be advanced to the wheat farmers already on the land who have 600 acres or more cleared.

Hon. M.F. Troy: They will want it, too.

Mrs. COWAN: I have no objection to them having it, provided their land is developed. Last year when I spoke of this land, I was told that it did not exist and I was also told that all the land that was worth while utilising was being utilised.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Mrs. COWAN: I have very distinct recollection of being told that I knew nothing of what I was talking about. I think I did know something about the matter, and I am prepared to take the report of these men who were in a position to know. Otherwise they have no right to be in their present positions and their reports on matters affecting this country should not be accepted at any time. We believe that the advantages will be very great indeed, that many people will find employment and that the three millions will be expended in the very direction and in the very areas in which we were given to understand there existed no land of any account that was not being utilised. This Bill will help that proposal, because it will induce owners to part with their land at reasonable prices if they cannot get the labour to develop it for themselves, or they will be obliged to give it up and let others who can work it come in and do so. Therefore, I am glad to support the Bill. I am pleased to accept the measure so far as it goes. If it is not quite as satisfactory as it might be in its early operation, it can easily be amended by Parliament.

COURTS OF SESSION BILL

Edith Cowan questioned the need for an insertion of a clause to facilitate the appeal process to a court of appeal.

COURTS OF SESSION BILL

THIRD READING

Legislative Assembly, 6 December 1921
Hansard p. 2129.

The Premier: I move —

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [4.50]: The Premier promised to give the House an explanation of the clause to which the member for Bunbury (Mr. Money) objected when we last discussed this measure. I would like to know what proceedings are specially referred to, seeing that the procedure for appeal is already provided for in Statutes and rules, regarding the revision of decisions from the lower court. In view of that position, why is there any necessity for the clause?

The Premier (Hon. Sir James Mitchell — Northam [4.5]: The clause merely gives power to the court of appeal to amend any defect in connection with the appeal so that it may be dealt with on its merits.

Mrs COWAN: There is more in it than that.

The Premier: I have consulted the Solicitor General and he advised me that that is what the clause does. It merely enables the court of appeal to remedy any formal defect in connection with the appeal, so that it may be dealt with on its merits.

Mrs COWAN: It will, I think, practically —

Mr Speaker: Order, order! The hon. member cannot speak twice at the present stage.

Hon. W.C. Angwin (North-East Fremantle [4.52]: It is true, as the member for West Perth has stated, that when the Bill was before members in Committee there was no one in the House who could enlighten the Committee as to what was the meaning of Clause 37. Seeing that the clause was only passed on the casting vote of the Chairman, it is right to say that half of the Committee were not clear upon the Clause. It was thought that while the Supreme Court would have power to review certain judgments, they would not have power to quash judgments, but merely amend them. The Premier promised to make inquiries and enlighten the House.

The Premier: So I did and I have given the explanation.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Is there full right of appeal?

The Premier: Yes, there is.

Question put and passed; Bill read a third time.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL

Edith Cowan opposed the proposal to permit gambling opportunities at community fairs and other places.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 28 September 1921

Hansard p. 1016.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.19] : I feel that I cannot support the second reading of the Bill. We ought not to get down to such a low level that we can take care of our poor and sick and our wounded soldiers, and our children who need air, only by offering a quid pro quo in the shape of gambling. I cannot believe that our spirit of humanity has fallen so low. Surely taxation is the right method of providing money for these objects. I am here to stand for that. I contend that the needs of sickness, the needs of poverty, and the needs of our wounded soldiers should be met either by direct giving or by direct taxation. I have listened to the Colonial Secretary, and I know from past experience, from what one sees of children with whom one is brought into contact, that the gambling methods which the Bill proposes to legalise are very deleterious. One does not want to see gambling, either at bazaars or in any other place, extended further by Act of Parliament. Personally, if I were only earning 5s. a week I would rather contribute in taxation a few pence from that pittance than see charitable institutions obliged to depend for aid on gambling pursuits, the wherewithal being obtained at the price of a quid pro quo in the shape of excitement or the chance of winning a large sum of money. In contributing a few pence weekly under such circumstances, I should feel that I was doing more for charity than people who contributed pounds in that direction through the medium of gambling. I have here a note from the Child Welfare Committee which met last week. It was a large conference, at which religious, educational, municipal and social bodies were represented; and the conference passed the following resolution:

That this conference condemns the Bill before Parliament seeking to legalise lotteries for charitable purposes.

That resolution was passed on Wednesday, the 21st inst.

Mr LATHAM: Some members of that conference were unpatriotic enough to remain sitting down while the National Anthem was being played.

Mrs COWAN: They may have contributed to funds for the benefit of sick and wounded soldiers, all the same. Their conduct in the respect referred to does not make any difference to the principle of this Bill. Certainly we should make it illegal to have children take any part in lotteries. When young people reach the age of 21 years, they can have the right to decide the gambling question for themselves. I quite realise the object of the sponsor of the Bill; I fully acknowledge that he wishes to do good. The proposal appeals to one in a specious manner, holding out the prospect of doing some good; but if we have not citizens who are willing to give either directly or by way of taxation what it is a duty to give, we shall not improve the position by passing a Bill to permit gambling, and indulgence in lotteries.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL

Edith Cowan voiced her opinion on a number of representational matters including reducing the membership of Parliament and the problem of malapportionment. She supported proportional representation.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL REFER TO SELECT COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 15 January 1923
Hansard p. 2870.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [3.33]: I have not spoken on the Bill previously, because, after listening to the long and somewhat wearisome debate, I decided it was better not to still further weary hon. members with an additional speech. But when I heard the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) say that there had been a party meeting and that certain arrangements had been made, I wished to dissociate myself with those proceedings.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: You were ill at the time; that is why you were not there.

Mrs COWAN: I have not been to any party meeting to discuss this measure. I have not spoken to any member of the Government on the question nor have I been subjected to any influence on the matter. I mentioned to some hon. members that I intended to support the suggestion that an extra member should be given to the metropolitan area. In my opinion the metropolitan area is under-represented if we go by the quota. I was elected as being in favour of a reduction of the number of members of both Houses, although I do not know that it would be advisable altogether to begin with this Chamber only at the present time. There is no suggestion of reduction in the Bill and really no increase. As a matter of fact, on a population basis, the metropolitan area is entitled to 24 members. It will, therefore, be appreciated that in getting two extra members we are not getting anything like our fair quota. I object to the statements that have been made that I as a member on the Government side of the House have been influenced and dictated to as to what attitude I shall adopt. I resent the suggestion that I have been told that I cannot act along the lines I consider right. If anyone will move for reduction in the number of members I will give them my support. If the member for North Perth (Mr. MacCullum Smith) moves in that direction I have told him I will support him, but I am afraid that I will be the only other supporter he will get. In those circumstances, therefore, it is a waste of time to pursue such a course, and we have wasted too much already.

Mr Speaker: I do not think I can allow a general discussion on these matters.

Mrs COWAN: The member for Sussex was allowed to speak about proportional representation. Am I not allowed to do so?

Mr Speaker: He was pointing out what it would mean in order to get the information necessary if a select committee were appointed.

Mrs COWAN: Any proposal for proportional representation will have my support. I do not think that we should have a select committee appointed at the present juncture, for in my opinion, it would be a waste of time. If we have much more of our time wasted I shall feel inclined to get up and say, as was said by an influential public man many years ago, "For goodness sake, gentlemen, cease wasting time like this; let us get on with the work of the country."

Hon W.C. Angwin: That would suit the Ministry very well.

The Minister for Mines: Hear, hear!

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Edith Cowan voted against an amendment to the Factories and Shops Act which excluded women and children from new provisions on working hours. The Bill was concerned with establishing holidays to be observed and additional hours for shops to be permitted to open on holidays.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 11 October 1921
Hansard pp. 1139 - 1146.

Resumed from 5th October: Hon G. Taylor in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Hansard p. 1141.

Mr MacCallum Smith: I move—

That the following new clause be inserted to stand as Clause 13: "Section one hundred and seven of the principal Act is hereby amended by striking out the words "at six" in the last line of paragraph (a) of sub-clause 1, and inserting in lieu thereof the words "not later than eight."

The original Act sets out that the provisions of Sections 102 to 106 shall apply to chemists and druggists subject to provisions, including one, among others, that on any day when other shops subject to those sections are required to close not later than 6 o'clock, druggists and chemists shall close not later than 6 o'clock as well. The proposed new clause will enable chemists' shops to remain open till 8 o'clock. The present Act has worked considerable hardship and inconvenience to many people in the suburbs. It is possible to obtain medicines in case of emergency by ringing up a chemist or by going into a shop which remains open at night in the city. It is not always convenient for citizens to adopt that course, and as a result many people have experienced great inconvenience and in some cases hardship. We shall not place restrictions upon people who require medicine in case of emergency. It is extraordinary that hotel keepers and others selling liquor can keep open till 9 whereas chemists whose services may be required for the purpose of saving life must close at 6 o'clock. A large number of chemists have requested that this amendment should be made.

Hon. P. Collier: How many?

Mr MacCallum Smith: I have a letter with 12 signatures. The Minister has the same letter, too.

Mr MacCallum: We all have had that letter.

Mr MacCallum Smith: The Minister has had it, but he said there were six. If he reads the letter again he will see there are 12 signatures. Naturally the chemists in the city do not want the shops in the suburbs to remain open, for they want to continue the night shops which are highly profitable. We should not consider the question of profits which these people are making but we should consider the convenience of the people living in the suburbs.

Hansard pp. 1143-1146

Mrs COWAN: I support the amendment having been spoken to by many persons on this subject in the same way as on the subject of the small suburban shops. The existing position in both respects presses heavily on many people. A referendum on the question now under consideration might yield a different result from that of the ballot of chemists alone. If the people were asked,

the result would be different. Wives have frequently to wait for their husbands to return home with money before they can send for medicines, these being rarely supplied on credit except to people well known to the chemist. I can quite understand that chemists in general want their shops closed at the earlier hour; but I do not think the present closing hour has resulted in benefit to the community generally. In Melbourne the suggestion has been made that some chemists' shops should be allowed to keep open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and others from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The early closing of suburban grocery and other shops presses hardly on many members of the poorer classes, as I amply learnt during my election campaign.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

New clause put and negatived.

New clause:

Mr McCallum: I move—

That the following new clause be added:

Section 155 of the principal Act is hereby amended by adding a new subsection as follows: 'The provisions of Subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall not apply to the working hours of women and young persons as provided in Section 125.'

Section 125 limits the hours for young persons under 16 and for women to 44 per week, but Section 155 provides that an award of the court, or an agreement which has been made a common rule, shall override the Act. That gives the court power to make an award, and the organisations power to make an agreement, to extend the hours from 44 to 48. The position is that certain current agreements will expire between this and Christmas, and if the organisations decline to negotiate fresh agreements, this section will then apply and they will work only 44 hours, whereas if they consent to negotiate they will run the risk of being compelled to work 48 hours. I judge that it was intended that young persons under 16 years of age and women should work only 44 hours. This State is behind all others in respect of the 44 hour week. I ask that the section be so amended that the court shall not have power to override the provisions under Section 144 in respect of women and young persons. I aim at making Section 144 binding. This will tend to smoother working in the industries, and the industrial organisations will not be tempted to decline to enter into negotiations with the employers.

Mr Sampson: The proposed new clause will have the effect of differentiating the hours. Young persons and women will not be permitted to work more than 44 hours per week. This will entail serious inconvenience in factories where the men are working 48 hours per week.

Hon. P. Collier: That applies to women and young persons now, where there is no Arbitration Court award.

Mr Sampson: It will cause a great deal of inconvenience in factories where the men work 48 hours. Further argument will be needed from the hon. member before I agree to the new clause.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mr McCallum: It is overtime, and does not that explode the argument of the member for Swan? He said it would be impossible to have two sections working different hours, and now he admits that the girls are working 44 hours and the men 48 hours!

Mr Sampson: I said inconvenient, not impossible.

Mr McCallum: If that is the only objection it applies to every Act of Parliament.

Mrs COWAN: Will not this be a distinct handicap to the employment of women?

Mr McCallum: There is the same old argument.

Mrs COWAN: I speak from the women's point of view.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I would like to see them all married.

Mrs COWAN: Yes, and you would not legislate to give them only 44 hours' work a week.

Mr McCallum: Every time we try to get a reform for the women, the cry goes up that we are trying to prejudice the employment of women.

Mr Sampson: That is the effect.

Mr McCallum: Can the hon. member say that it has limited the number of girls in the printing industry? One firm threatened to dismiss all the girls and went so far as to put off half the staff, but there are now more girls employed in the industry than ever before.

The Minister for Mines: Does not that prove that the Court could award different hours if it thought fit?

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I am in favour of that portion of the Act which provides for women working shorter hours than men. If women have to go to the court, on a question of convenience their hours may be increased to conform to those worked by men. I should have thought the member for West Perth would have jumped at the amendment, and that any argument tending to benefit the conditions as applied to women and children would have had her keenest support.

Mrs COWAN: I am not so sure of the benefits. If you handicap women in their employment I cannot agree to assist you.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I am almost driven to the conclusion that the member for West Perth is one of the biggest Tories in the Chamber.

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:-

Ayes	..	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	..	19
Majority against					4

AYES

Mr Angwin
Mr Chesson
Mr Clydesdale
Mr Collier
Mr Corboy
Mr Heron
Mr Lambert
Mr Marshall

Mr McCallum
Mr Munsie
Mr Simons
Mr Teesdale
Mr J. Thomson
Mr Willcock
Mr O'Loughlen (*Teller*)

NOES

Mr Angelo
Mr Money
Mr Broun
Mrs Cowan
Mrs Denton
Mr Durack
Mr Latham
Mr C.C. Maley
Mr H.K. Maley
Mr Mann

Sir James Mitchell
Mr Boyland
Mr Pickering
Mr Sampson
Mr Scaddan
Mr J.M. Smith
Mr A. Thomson
Mr Underwood
Mr Mullany (*Teller*)

New clause thus negated.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENTS

Legislative Assembly, 6 December 1921

Hansard pp. 2102-2103.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Section 4 of the principal Act defines a boarding-house as follows:-

"Boarding-house" means and includes any place in which meals are sold or offered for sale to the public and any place in which ten or more boarders or lodgers apart from members of the family are in residence.

The Council's amendment means that all boarding houses will be excluded from the operations of the Act.

Mr Mann: It means that the private boarding houses will be exempt.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is so.

Mr McCallum: There are some large private boarding-houses.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am informed that there are many small boarding houses which will be exempt under this provision, but not many large one. I move—

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Mr McCallum: I hope the Committee will not agree to the Council's amendment because it will have a very far-reaching effect. I do not know one boarding-house in Perth which could not come under this exemption, if it was so desired. Forrest House is a case in point. There are probably more boarders at that establishment than in any two hotels in the city. The proprietors of the boarding-house employ a very large staff, yet they would merely have to say that they will not serve meals to the general public, but only to boarders and they would come within the exemption.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are in that position now.

Mr McCallum: If Forrest House can be exempted, hon. members will see what a far-reaching effect the amendment will have.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are not many such large boarding-houses.

Mr McCallum: The real reason for the amendment, as advanced in the Legislative Council, is that the boarding-house keepers desire to work their staff longer hours than the existing Act permits. The whole move is to permit these people to work their girls for more than 44 hours.

Mrs COWAN: I understand that the trouble is that under the Act at present they cannot arrange the hours in a satisfactory manner. They do not want to work the girls any longer hours, but as the position stands now, it is not possible for them to arrange the satisfactory working of establishments.

Mr McCallum: If they are exempted, these people can do anything they like regarding the girls' hours.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: They will be able to start them at 5 am and keep them going till midnight.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Edith Cowan supported an amendment to the Health Act to require the reporting of venereal disease.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL

COUNCIL AMENDMENTS

Legislative Assembly, 5 January 1922
Hansard pp 2748 - 2749.

Mrs COWAN: I support the amendment. Those who have always asked for the signed statement are getting exactly what they want. At the same time we are not asking the public to make perjurers of themselves as previously. No one could say that he knew a thing which only a medical man could know, and had the Act not been altered the point would undoubtedly have been tested. This amendment provides ample protection. When dealing with such a cruel and devastating disease, we cannot do too much to protect the women and children. Opponents of the amendment apparently do not want any compulsion at all. We must put aside the idea that venereal disease is a crime, because it is often innocently contracted. Those who go amongst the people suffering from this disease should realise the necessity for doing our best to eradicate it. The member for North-East Fremantle, if he would, could speak of its effects as seen at the Hospital for the Insane.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: *That is not so.*

Mrs COWAN: The hon. member knows that it is so; the children there and the cases of G.P.I. prove it. The person informed against can go to his or her doctor. Surely it is in the interests of the race and of those pitiful cases which continually come under our notice that something should be done to prevent the disease. I cannot understand the inconsistency of some who object to this provision. Why do they not object to the boys and girls in the Children's Court being examined for infectious disease by the order of two justices.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: *Their people have agreed to it.*

Mrs COWAN: It has not been voluntary; such examinations have been made by order of the court.

Mr PICKERING: Not for a specific disease.

Mrs COWAN: Decidedly; and in the five years the court has had the power to order such examinations, no objection has been raised. Therefore, why object to the Commissioner having this power? Do members realise that we have 1,000 fresh cases of venereal disease every year.

Hon W.C. Angwin: Are you sure of it?

Mrs. COWAN: It has been said in this House that women have been more manly than men in the matter of informing on the opposite sex. This is not correct. I have made inquiries and find that women are womanly enough to wish to protect the race, and have informed on men. This provision cannot possibly operate harshly against women, it will engender confidence and help them to come for treatment. The whole community would be better if every member of it could be examined from time to time. The idea that disease is a "crime" should be got rid of. Whether the disease is acquired innocently, or as the result of what is a generally considered, and what I for my part consider, to be immoral conduct, the disease should be cured. I welcome Dr. Saw's amendment because it seems to me to meet the whole difficulty. To say that any policeman will have power to take action under the amendment any more than he could before seems to me nonsense. This measure will never be worked as a Police Act and it is not a police measure. Mention has been made in this connection of "the accused". But nobody is accused. A deal of nonsense has been talked on the question from time to time, because it has been looked at from an utterly wrong aspect. As far as possible, the Bill makes the position absolutely fair between men and women. I do not think it ever will be or can be used wrongfully against women. The position now is very different from what it was in the days of Josephine Butler. We must do

something to reach those who refuse to be treated; we must reach them for the sake of the race, for the sake of the poor little suffering children one sees, and for the sake of the grown-ups whom one sees carrying a legacy of sorrow all their lives. Let us not go on beating the air and making this legislation ineffective. I represent a very great number of women on the National Council of Women, and we supported the original measure. We knew what we were talking about, and we know what we wanted. The medical women of Western Australia support the measure; I have not heard of one medical woman in this State who does not support it. Dr. Saw's amendment has my support because I feel that it is a safeguard against the possibility of any objectionable action being taken under the measure. The Red Cross Society of Geneva hold that legislation for the treatment of this disease is essential. The society advocate the same kind of law as we have here being ultimately needed. The British National Council for Venereal Diseases also support this same idea and America has gone in for it very strongly, and I understand with good effect.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: That is because they have all been fooled by the Western Australian law. Our Act has been trumpeted throughout the world as an ideal Act of Parliament. That is an absolute fact.

Mrs COWAN: I support the Bill because there is no registration of women possible under it, and because there is possible under it no periodical examination of women such as obtained in the days of the Contagious Diseases Acts which Mrs. Butler fought, and because there is no segregation of women possible under it. We should do all we can to make the measure a success, with a view to preventing the dreadful suffering and misery that some of use have seen. On one occasion there was brought before the Justices at the Children's Court a girl whose state was obviously so bad that we at once ordered her to the hospital for medical examination. A few days later she was brought to the court to give evidence. So dreadful was the girl's condition that the table on which she leaned and the chair on which she sat were ordered by the medical authorities to be disinfected before anybody else should sit there; and that disinfecting was done in the court before the case went on. The girl was in a terrible, a hopeless condition; and yet she was only 16 years of age. I would not mind if under the measure a mistake were made in the case of even someone related to myself, so long as steps were taken to combat effectively this terrible disease and safeguard little children.

HOSPITALS' BILL

Edith Cowan supported an amendment to change rules for the appointment of Hospital Board memberships to exclude “special institutions” such as King Edward Memorial Hospital and Wooroloo Sanatorium in order to preserve the existing Boards of Management at those institutions.

HOSPITALS' BILL COMMITTEE STAGE

Legislative Assembly, 5 December 1922

Hansard p. 1999

Mrs COWAN: I support the amendment, more particularly on account of the very satisfactory management of the King Edward Memorial Hospital. The officials and the visiting boards there and at the Wooroloo Sanatorium have been of great assistance to the Government.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Edith Cowan controversially sought the access of wives to the Arbitration Court and the possibility of payment for duties as required for domestic servants.

INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 16 November 1921
Hansard pp. 1730-1731.

Mrs. COWAN: (West Perth) [8.33]: I do not wish to support this Bill at the present time for the simple reason that I think it would be better to wait until we can bring in satisfactory and conclusive amendments which are badly needed to the Arbitration Act. It would have been better if some attempt had been made to get the Government to bring down a Bill of this description than to deal with the question piecemeal in the way we are trying to do. I realise that there are plenty of men in this House to deal with the questions which have arisen with regard to Clause 2, but if the Bill is proceeded with I intend to move an amendment which stands on the Notice Paper. I do not know whether I am in order in reading it now.

Mr. Speaker: No. The hon. member may refer to it, but she can deal with it in Committee.

Mrs. COWAN: The amendment is the only logical corollary to bringing household workers under the Act.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is in order in discussing it, because domestic servants are mentioned in the Bill.

Mrs. COWAN: I think it will be a great mistake to eliminate the words mentioned in paragraph (b).

Mr. Munsie: Let the poor girls work for anything the "missus" likes to give them.

Mrs. COWAN: I do not wish or suggest such a thing. Why should not married women have a union? Why should they be cut off from the same privileges? I do not think members of the Opposition would wish that their wives should be cut off from the same standing and privileges as a domestic worker will enjoy.

Mr. Corboy: I would sooner have her as a partner than as an employee.

Mrs. COWAN: This is my reason for giving notice of the amendment. If the Bill were passed, a woman doing domestic work would be forced to do more than ever, and she should have a reasonable wage and be able to apply to the Arbitration Court for proper hours, payment and so on. No man, when he marries a woman, asks her to be anything else but his wife and the mother of his children. He does not ask her to be the cook, the housekeeper, the cleaner, the scrubber and the washerwoman. Therefore, if we are to bring any section of household workers under the Act, I maintain that logically, and in justice to the married women, they have a right also to be brought under the Act and have their hours, etc., dictated by the judge, before whom they will have an opportunity to state their case. Of course, they will not be bound to go to the Arbitration Court. They need not be bound by the Arbitration Court if they do not wish it. If it is good for the housemaid and cook to go to the Arbitration Court, if it is good for the washerwoman to go to the Arbitration Court, it is equally good for the wife to do so. That is my reason for giving notice of the amendment.

Mr. Teesdale: We shall have a revolution.

Mrs. COWAN: That is perfectly true. I have heard it stated in this House that there are some things which can only be put right by a revolution. Consequently, if measures of this nature are brought down, we must expect revolutions. Logically, that is the only thing which can happen. If the

privacy of every home is to be invaded by people going in to see whether the wages book is properly kept and whether the time sheets are properly kept, I am not objecting to it if it is considered to be the proper thing; but I want to see that the wife gets a time sheet, and the husband will then have to keep it together with the wages sheet, and the wife will have her proper hours day and night. She will not be bound to go to the Arbitration Court if she does not wish to, and she will have a very much better time than ever before. I must ask this House to consider seriously these amendments to the Arbitration Act. They are serious and may possibly deal a blow to home life.

Mr. Lambert: Then why make them a laughing stock by your amendment?

Mrs. COWAN: The member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) said we shall have a revolution. It is time we had a revolution in that respect —

Mr. Simons: Will the court be asked to define the duties of a wife?

Mrs. COWAN: But let it come by degrees, if possible. I stand for the women of this State.

Members: No.

Mr. Marshall: You do not stand for my wife's cause, anyhow, and I will see that she does not go to the Arbitration Court.

Mrs. COWAN: The hon. member, judging by his tone and the remarks he made here one night, is probably one whose wife might be most happy and pleased if brought under the Arbitration Act.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY BILL

Edith Cowan successfully sought for the Inspection of Machinery Bill to be recommitted to ensure female attendants in passenger lifts came within the ambit of the Bill.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY BILL COMMITTEE STAGE

**Legislative Assembly, 14 September 1921
Hansard p. 747.**

***Mr McCallums* (South Fremantle)**

I move an amendment—

That the Bill be recommitted for the further consideration of Subclause 6 of Clause 4.

Under the clause, no machinery driven by a motor of less than one horse-power will be subject to inspection. The latest method of driving machinery by electric current is to have small separate motors for each machine. Many of those motors are of less than one horse-power. Under the subclause, practically all the machinery in printing offices would be exempt from the operations of the measure. This applies with particular force to the more dangerous machines, such as the platen machine, which has been the cause of more accidents than any other machine in the printing industry. They are driven by very small motors attached direct to the machine, without shafts. The subclause would exempt all those from the operations of the Bill. I desire to have those machines included, even though each machine in the printing industry. They are driven by very small motors attached direct to the machine, without shafts. The subclause would exempt all those from the operations of the Bill. I desire to have those machines included, even though each machine be driven by a motor of less than one horse-power.

***Mrs Cowan:* (West Perth) [4.40]:** I also wish to have the Bill recommitted, for the purpose of further considering Clause 15, relating to female attendants in passenger lifts.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for South Fremantle might include that clause in his motion.

Mr McCallums: Yes, I will do so.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL NO. 1, 1921

Edith Cowan spoke strongly in support of the Bill which attempted to more effectively control liquor sales. Such legislation was regarded as more acceptable and pragmatic than prohibition.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL NO. 1

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 13 December 1921

Hansard pp. 2353-2355.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [11.37]: I rise to support the second reading of the Bill, because I was returned to the House to support local option by a bare majority vote and also to do my utmost to help in any way to eliminate by degrees the evils of this traffic from our midst. I am one of those who believe that straight-out prohibition is an impossibility here at the present time, and that we have to go gradually, step by step, and the public must go with us.

Hon W.C. Angwin: It must be done throughout Australia. You cannot do it in this State alone.

Mrs. COWAN: The hon. member may be right. Perhaps members do not think sufficiently of the fact that alcohol is a racial poison and that it is very important that they should think deeply on this point when dealing with the subject, because of the effect it must have on the race. I remember what an illumination it was to me the first time I heard the subject discussed from that point of view. It was by Dr Saleeby in London in 1913. I never realised before that there were three racial poisons that could absolutely poison the very germ that laid the foundation of life of the coming child. When we remember this, we should think very seriously, and deliberate well on what we are doing when we encourage a traffic which we know is so unsatisfactory and deadly in its results to the race.

Mr Lambert: What are the other two poisons?

Mrs COWAN: White lead and syphilis. If this traffic were so remarkably good as some members would have us believe, is it not strange that licensees nearly always endeavour to secure employees who are abstainers? Again, many publicans do not drink at all because they realise the evils arising from liquor, the hold it might get upon them, and the detriment it would be to their business and to their surroundings generally. That is one of the points which always appeals strongly to thinking people. I have heard great fault found with the Premier tonight. I think, with the pressure that has been brought to bear upon him from both sides, he has done even better than we might have expected, although I do not agree with everything that is contained in the Bill. He is right in regard to his taxation proposals, and will get any support I can give him in that respect. If we can afford to spend enormous amounts yearly in drink, and only a moderate amount on education, there is something wrong with our point of view, and we are not particularly balanced people as to what is best for the community. Even with this tax we are not going to pay the cost of everything that drink brings upon the State. We have only to look at the cost to the community for the upkeep of our gaols and our hospitals. Our gaols are full of people who have got there, many of them, as a result of drink. Our police have to be paid and kept largely because of the numbers of people who drink; as have also our judges and our stipendiary magistrates. Our Old Men's Home and our asylums are all affected. Venereal disease is brought about probably more as a result of people drinking than anything £82,000 a year on State children, very largely because of the drinking habits of their parents. If we do into the proportions we should probably be amazed, just as we are amazed at the results of drink as we see them in the Children's Court.

Hon P. Collier: Venereal disease has swept over countries where the people have been non-drinkers.

Mrs COWAN: Quite so, and that always will be. The greater proportion of the people is affected as a consequence of drink than of anything else. Then we have our orphanages full mainly for the same reason. One of the saddest things is to see the results of our wine shops. I support every word the member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) said on that subject. It is heartbreaking to see what is going on, and realise what these wine shops are doing. It is all very well to talk about making

wine the drink of the people. We cannot do that unless we break it down very considerably. I have spent a great deal of time in continental countries and know something about what people get there in the way of wine. They certainly do not get anything like Australian wine. The wine they do get would in this country be regarded as a temperance beverage.

Hon P. Collier: Wine-drinking countries in Europe are the most sober of the countries.

Mrs COWAN: Because the wine they drink there would come under the heading of a temperance drink if it were used in Australia. People can, of course, get strong drink if they want it. The wine that is usually drunk of the continent is practically non-alcoholic. It is rather sour and has no strength in it, and would not affect a man's brain in the least.

Mr Lambert: It would give you a pain.

Mrs COWAN: If hotels are the wonderful places they are said to be, and are such a boon to the community, why is it that screens are needed across the bar doors? It has always puzzled me, as a woman, why, if people want a harmless glass of liquor, they have to go behind a screen to drink it. I have only once been in a public bar, and that was during the war. There were some young soldiers in the bar, and some of us went in and persuaded them to go quietly back to Blackboy and get away from any further temptation. I can see no objection to a person going into a bar, if he desires to do so, but cannot understand the reason for the screen.

Mr Teesdale: It is to keep the dust out.

Mrs COWAN: There should be no need for a screen for that purpose. I should like to have seen the Bill provide for the taking of a poll on election day. If we can save the country £3,577 on the next occasion we ought to do so. It may not sound a very startling sum when we realise the amount of the deficit, but it ought to be possible to save that amount. I understand that was the cost of the last poll. I am in favour of the registration of bar attendants, but regret that nothing has been embodied in the Bill to abolish barmaids. I have the greatest respect for many women who are married well, and whom one meets in ordinary society all the world over, but who have been barmaids. I have nothing to say against them. It is not a suitable employment for women. By making the bar attractive by the employment of barmaids our sons are the more likely to be tempted and led astray. I should like to see men do their own dirty work, if they must have hotels and bars, and run the bars themselves. Clause 2 of the Bill requires amendment and the word "alcohol drink" defined. As it is, an extraordinary position may arise if no better definition is put in than at present exists. I cannot say I think the clause dealing with temporary licenses is a good one. I am opposed to the three-fifths majority. My electors were strongly in favour of the bare majority vote. I do not think compensation should be given. Ten years' notice was given, and everyone knew that there was this period in which to get ready for the altered conditions. If the House decides by a majority to give compensation, it should certainly be made to apply to the reduction houses as well as the others. I do not see why it should be made to apply to any in the circumstances. People who have been referred to as bona fide travellers have been a curse, and I am glad the Premier is going to do his best to abolish the type. I hope the House will assist him in that direction. The general public have given evidence of their desire to lessen the evil. Even though they were in the minority, I am going to argue on the lines of the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood). He said that the minority who wanted a drink should be considered more than the majority who did not. I claim that the minority of those who voted for non-license deserve as much consideration as the majority who voted for reduction. The thing cuts both ways. We had better use our logic and realise that. It was stated that we had no right to have reduction at all. I am sorry that this has not been provided for in the Bill. We should have the right to vote reduction as well as no license. I do not agree that we should necessarily copy the State of Victoria. If we have 500 hotels for a population of 330,000 people, we are altogether out of proportion. In Victoria there is a population of one and a half million.

The Premier: The proportion in the two States is about the same.

Mrs COWAN: We have more hotels than we want, and Victoria also must have more than she wants. The member for Pilbara spoke of non-productiveness in many directions, and that we

should lost by it. We lose far more from the effect of alcohol on the people who have become hopeless and helpless, and whom have to keep out of our own pockets because they are unable to contribute to any taxation themselves. I agree that to take a vote of the whole State might be the best means of settling the question. It would probably give us a very good idea of what the whole community want. But I do not think that we shall be permitted to do this, either by the licensed victuallers or by anyone else. Possibly "no license" would be carried throughout the State. Therefore that means of finding out has been carefully avoided. As regards clubs, I certainly think they should be on the same footing as hotels. The trading hours I would like to see made from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Why should a public house have a right to longer hours of trading than ordinary business places have? Throughout the rest of the Commonwealth the hours are now from nine to six.

Mr Johnson: The hours are from six to six in some States.

Mrs COWAN: I see no reason why drink should be sold after hours. It would be a good idea if the sale of drink in hotels were prohibited after 6 p.m., and if then they were only permitted to supply meals. I know that travelling to Moora and elsewhere with my husband I found that after 4 p.m., the only thing obtainable in hotels was liquor. Nothing to eat was obtainable, except it was a biscuit. These experiences refer to some years back; but if that condition of affairs still exists, it should be remedied. One should be able to get a dinner at an hotel in the evening.

Mr Simons: The hours of hotels should be from nine to six, seeing that the sale of drink is a business transaction, and especially seeing that the traffic is one that is detrimental to the community, and not beneficial. Publicans themselves, in fact all people connected with the trade, admit it. On the other hand, I acknowledge that temperance people are not doing what they should in the way of providing substitutes for liquor. As to the remark of the member for Nelson (Mr J H Smith) about taking wine for one's stomach's sake, the text simply shows that alcoholic liquor should be taken medicinally, and not as a beverage. I support the second reading, believing that with various amendments the Bill may be made a satisfactory measure.

LICENCING ACT AMENDMENT BILL 1922

Edith Cowan supported most of the provisions in the Licensing Act Amendment Bill (1922) which sought to establish a Licensing Court of three magistrates (and deputies) with jurisdiction throughout the whole State from a proclaimed date. Compensation was to be paid to retailers if they lost their liquor license. In Committee Edith Cowan successfully moved an amendment (18 September) that a written report prepared by the Licensing Court be open for inspection by the applicant. She supported two amendments (on 20 September) concerning building requirements for license holders. On one occasion (27 September) Edith Cowan expressed the view that the power to grant renewals of licenses should not be in the hands of one man. Edith Cowan also had some concerns alleviated about the costs associated with paying deputy magistrates (27 September).

Edith Cowan unsuccessfully opposed an amendment to extend the time period between local option polls (3 October). She was also against an amendment (12 October) which required a 30 per cent turnout for a local option vote to be ratified. At one stage (4 October) Edith Cowan opposed special license considerations being given to bona fide travellers as this would provide a loophole for the sale of liquor. Moreover, she was also successful (4 October) when she moved an amendment to preclude 16 year old boys and girls as servants in hotels.

LICENCING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 5 September 1922

Hansard pp. 563-564.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [5.26]: I have listened with great interest to the previous speakers on this Bill, and in listening to them I have been extremely puzzled to know why a person who believes in local option should be so objectionable and such a wowser. It may be right to call such people wowsers. I am rapidly coming to the conclusion that to be called a wowser is something to be proud of. The object of all those women who take an interest in this question is to protect the young people of the community. It is rather painful to listen to some of the talk on the subject; for instance, with regard to the tyranny that is likely to be exercised over the people who are so anxious to help us to suffer from delirium tremens, misery, poverty, lunacy, sickness, and the many other evils which come in the train of drink. There are also the sufferings which come upon the race owing to the heredity which is passed on by drink. It puzzles me that speakers on this subject should be so forgetful of these facts as to say that we should not protect our young people and the generations to come. Even if they wish to continue to drink themselves, surely it is their duty to do what the Premier proposes in this Bill - accept the idea that our boys and girls under 21 years of age shall not be supplied with drink. That is a thing for which I consider the Premier is much to be commended, and the Commission are also to be commended.

Surely any parent must realise that if it is good for publicans to prefer to employ sober people in their public houses, then it is good for us to keep our children sober, at any rate until they reach the age of 21. With regard to the extraordinary argument about a boy of 18 being sent to the war, and yet not being allowed to take a drink, I feel that one has the right answer thus: At least women did not make the law that sent boys of 18 to the front. We women had no voice in that. If we desire to protect our sons up to the age of 21 years, both from war and from drink, I think we have a right as women to say that we desire that protection for them, and to get it. While on this phase of the question, I wish to mention that I recently received a letter from the National Council of Women, representing 33 organisations which send delegates to the council. This council represents some thousands of women, and large numbers of children. The resolution reads -

That this meeting of the National Council of Women affirms the principle of local option with reference to the liquor traffic, and without compensation to the trade, as a 10 years limit was given.

I think most people are somewhat puzzled as to why it should be considered necessary to give the trade compensation, after having given it a 10 years limit in place of compensation. We must remember we have only tried the results of the existing Act for 10 months. There has been only one local option poll. We do not yet know what the results of local option will be. At least one can say that a local option poll is educative, if it is nothing else, and for that reason alone it is quite good and should be kept. Now, local option does not include compensation either for reduction or no license.

The Minister for Mines: Neither does the Bill.

Mrs COWAN: But the Bill proposes instead a licenses reduction board with compensation. The opinions I have expressed are the opinions of women who have considered the matter very carefully. I may say that the W.C.T.U. and the Women's Service Guild do not belong to the National Council of Women, so that those two prohibition organisations will have to be reckoned with outside the 33 organisations which have not voted for straight out prohibition. One sometimes wonders, after listening to some members of this House, whether prohibition perhaps is not the wisest course, especially when one realises how difficult it is to deal with people who are not even willing to try to save the young from this evil.

I only regret that in this Bill there is nothing making it compulsory to close wine shops altogether. Wine shops are far worse in their effects than are hotels. They should be prevented from doing the damage they are doing to our young people. No one can deny the serious effect they have had on our young people and many of our women. The reduction issue in this Bill is curiously put. We are to have reduction, but if there be no fund for compensation, then the reduction shall not take effect. Further than that, the reduction board is to exist for only six years. After that, I take it, if the traffic prove a satisfactory means of bringing in revenue to the Government, we shall have licenses issued in all directions. Some time ago this was found extremely unsatisfactory, and the issuing of licenses was stopped. The community has been none the worse for that. I sincerely hope the Bill will not make it possible that there shall be no reduction of licenses after six years.

The Premier: We shall wipe out the lot if the board remains long enough.

Mrs COWAN: If the community wants to wipe out the lot, why should the community be prevented? I congratulate the Premier on the "bona fide traveller" clause in the Bill. There was no necessity for the existing provision. Most certainly Sunday should be a day of rest from drink: it would be a tremendous boon to the wives and sisters of drinkers. When I hear husbands talking of their right of freedom to drink, I often wonder how they would feel if their wives were one and two bottle women per day. I will certainly support the Premier in getting any profits he can out of the trade, for the higher the price of drink, the more restricted will be its consumption. If we must have the traffic - I am not a prohibitionist, nor have I ever belonged to a temperance organisation, but would gladly help others to get away from temptation - then by all means let us do whatever we can to restrict it. The Bill contains no provision for appeal to the Supreme Court. I do not think that is wise. Certainly the experienced members of the past licensing benches would not support it. Sooner or later provision must be made for such appeals. The only appeal to the Supreme Court contemplated in the Bill is in connection with mortgages. Why should we always want to trouble about the monetary issue? Subclause 7 of Clause 78 strikes me as not being what it should be. In the past we have not delegated such powers to one man. It is to be possible for this body of three men to delegate their powers to one man. I question the wisdom of this. Certainly renewals should not be dealt with on those lines, whatever is to be said for transfers and the issue of temporary licenses. Again, we talk of not allowing boys and girls to be served with drink in hotels, but it is proposed to allow them to carry drink and supply it to others - surely a grave inconsistency! We should not allow our boys and girls to enter into such business at all.

Mr J H Smith: Is not a boy of 21 a man?

Mrs COWAN: No, certainly not; neither physiologically nor in any other way. Another point to be looked into is the methods of some of our boating clubs. I understand that the youthful members of those clubs are freely served with whatever liquor they wish, and that they go on the river with it, frequently with calamitous results. If this be the case, that point should be dealt with in the Bill. I do not know whether the Bill provides for a rebate of duty on liquor for medical purposes in hospitals and charitable institutions: certainly that point might well be taken into account. We would be the better for the abolition of all railway bars, but if the House will not agree to that, the clause governing such bars is, I think, a fair one. Most men take a most unnecessary top up last thing at night at those bars. Many a home has been spoiled by that nightcap. I was interested in the dissertation on the billiard rooms. It is extraordinary that even in this dreadful city of Perth we have had at the Soldiers' Institute for some years a billiard room which is nearly always crowded, but where no drink is served. They do not require it. Surely if that institute can be run without drink, the serving of drink in hotel billiard rooms is also unnecessary! One of the main points to be stressed is that temptation should not be forced on children or women in any way. If one half at least of the race cannot be kept sober and women and children helped to become sober by the abolition of wine shops and the debarring of boys and girls from hotels, the outlook is pretty black and the community will not have much to thank Parliament for. We are here for the good of those who come after us, and it is our duty to do what we can for the future of the race. I do not think local option has had a fair trial in this community. I came into the House on that issue, and I intend to stand by it and endeavour to get as near to it as possible.

LICENCING ACT (AMENDMENT BILL)

Legislative Assembly, 19 September 1922
Hansard p. 812.

Mrs COWAN: I move an amendment -

That the following words be added :-

"The written report abovementioned shall be open to inspection by the applicant."

I think this point has been overlooked, and that the applicant is fully entitled to see the report.

Mr Lambert: There ought to be a stipulation that a copy of the report shall be handed to the applicant not less than 48 hours prior to the hearing of the application.

Mrs COWAN: I am perfectly willing to accept the hon. Member's suggestion, and I ask leave to add to my amendment the words -

"Not less than 48 hours prior to the hearing of the application."

Leave given: the amendment amended accordingly.

Mr Chesson: The suggested notice of 48 hours is too short to allow of rebutting evidence to be brought.

Mr Corboy: I move an amendment on the amendment -

That "48 hours" be struck out, and "three days" inserted in lieu.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I do not think either 48 hours or three days would be any use, seeing that the licensing bench sit on fixed dates. The point might be dealt with in a new clause, which would provide that the clerk of courts shall furnish the applicant with a copy of the report.

Mr Money: In practice, 48 hours is found long enough. At one time these reports were not produced until the hearing of the application; therefore the amendment of the member for West Perth represents an improvement.

Amendment on the amendment put and negatived.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

LICENCING ACT AMENDMENT BILL IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 20 September 1922
Hansard p. 839.

Mrs Cowan: I hope the amendment will be carried. I regard this proposed extra door as a menace to our young people and to the women of the community. Moreover, I do not see why hotel keepers should be forced to go to the expense involved in the architectural alterations.

Legislative Assembly, 20 September 1922
Hansard p. 840.

Mrs Cowan: I support the amendment. Some years ago legislation of a similar nature to this was introduced in the United States, but was found very unsatisfactory. People learned a sharp lesson as a result of dictating to the licensing bench and the publicans concerning the number of rooms to be built. These rooms had to be used, and in many parts of the cities they were not used in a satisfactory manner. We do not want this kind of thing to occur here. It should not be made mandatory for the bench to order that such and such things should be done, but the bench should be given discretionary powers in the matter.

Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1922
Hansard p. 924.

Mrs Cowan: Power should not be placed in the hands of one man to grant renewals.

Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1922
Hansard, p. 926.

Mrs Cowan: Are the deputies of the court to be paid?

The Premier: Yes, certainly.

Mrs Cowan: Then that is a further charge, and no provision is made for it in the Bill.

Legislative Assembly, 3 October 1922
Hansard p. 965.

Mrs COWAN: I hope the amendment will not be carried and that the suggestion of the member for South Fremantle will not be accepted. We were promised a chance of increasing and decreasing hotels every three years, but now we are asked to forego that and accept the opportunity every five years, beginning in 1924. Surely the public deserve as much consideration with regard to these new conditions as do the publicans. Why is the publican alone considered? We are asked to have three polls in 15 years instead of three in nine years and now the member for Perth (Mr Mann) asks us to defer the next poll until 1928 and then take a poll every seven years after that. This would give us three polls in 21 years.

Mr Mann: I have not moved that.

Mrs COWAN: I do not think the publicans will object to the necessary control being exercised. They know it will help to keep their places in better order. Therefore, the more often a poll is taken, the better for the community and the publicans, though the latter do not realise it. We should at least fix the poll for 1924 and every five years thereafter, though I would prefer to make it every three years. The argument of the member for South Fremantle does not appeal to me. What is the difference between taking the poll in a year of two elections and in the following year when there is no election? The cost of it and the excitement over it would be no less; candidates for Parliament would be asked their views, and there would be as much commotion as if the poll were taken in between. Last year the elections were held in March and the local option poll was taken in the following May. What difference did it make? Very little. It is very much better to have the polls as often as possible. It would be unfair to fix the next one for later than 1924.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result -

Ayes	21
Noes	<u>13</u>
Majority for	<u>8</u>
AYES	
Mr Angelo	Mr Latham
Mr Angwin	Mr Mann
Mr Chesson	Mr Marshall
Mr Clydesdale	Mr McCallum
Mr Collier	Mr Pickering
Mr Corboy	Mr Plesse
Mr Denton	Mr Simons
Mr Durack	Mr J Thomson
Mr Gibson	Mr Troy
Mr Heron	Mr Munsie
Mr Johnston	(Teller)
NOES	
Mr Carter	Mr Scaddan
Mrs Cowan	Mr J M Smith
Mr Davies	Mr A Thomson
Mr George	Mr Underwood
Sir James Mitchell	Mr Walker
Mr Richardson	Mr Mullany
Mr Sampson	(Teller)

Amendment thus passed.

Legislative Assembly, 4 October 1922
Hansard p. 979.

Mrs Cowan: I do not intend to support the amendment of the member for Claremont. I agree with the member of Gascoyne, who said that we should show some consideration to the hotelkeepers and their servants. We should also remember the younger people in the country and make it impossible for them to drive long distances in order to get liquor. If the amendment is carried in any form I hope it will provide that the distance to be travelled will be 20 or 25 miles. The member for Claremont has induced me more than ever to oppose the amendment by reason of his remarks in the direction of establishing prohibition so far as he himself is concerned. It would be against my conscience to support the amendment, because I feel that the bona fide traveller clause should not exist either in regard to the town or the country. We are aware that in many country districts the different committees who worked in the direction of securing votes for reduction or no license, were asked by men on outlying farms to do so, because, it was explained, it was the only way in which they and the younger people could be saved against themselves. Many are induced at the present time to leave their farms to go into the towns on Sundays for the sole purpose of getting drink, and we know how they must feel on the Monday. In the interests of those people we should do all we can to support the Premier I having this provision entirely struck out.

Legislative Assembly, 4 October 1922
Hansard pp. 986-987.

Mrs Cowan: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 after “years”, the following words be inserted, “whether a servant of the licensee living on the premises or not.”

In an earlier clause provision is made that no person apparently under the age of 21 years of age is to be served with liquor. It is not right to allow boys and girls of 16 years to be employed in hotels as servants and allow them to act as messengers to deliver drink to others.

Legislative Assembly, 12 October 1922
Hansard p. 2148.

Mrs Cowan: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. This Chamber struck out the 30 per cent after due consideration. The three-fifths majority afford a very fair test without this 30 per cent vote. I hope the Committee will adhere to the original arrangement.

Mr Mann: Without a substantial vote in favour or prohibition, the enforcement of prohibition will be impossible. Importation of liquor is not controlled by the State, but only sale and resale.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Also wholesale.

Mr Mann: There is a train running every day from Port Augusta, and any traveller by that train can bring with him as much liquor as he chooses. If we have not a majority in favour of the proposal, it is useless.

Mrs Cowan: A three-fifths majority is provided for now.

NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL

Edith Cowan strongly supported the Bill to enhance the professional standards of nurses with the establishment of a registration procedure. She was also successful in her opposition to an amendment (14 December) which sought to provide registration to nurses on the basis of five years continuous nursing experience.

NURSES REGISTRATION BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 13 October 1921

Hansard pp. 1233-1237.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [6.10]: I support the Bill because it is the earnest desire of different sections of trained nurses that it should be passed. The nurses are of such importance to the community that their wishes deserve every consideration. Women who take up nursing and who do such splendid self-sacrificing work are the best people to know what is required for their profession.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is only for their registration.

Mrs COWAN: They are asking for registration. The sisters' subsection of the Returned Army Nurses are asking for the Bill. The Trained Nurses Association, which is the most powerful body of nurses in Australia, also are asking for it, and I think many of the untrained nurses desire it, those who have been practising for a long time and yet have never trained under any of the associations. They realise that if they pass this examination they can become trained nurses, recognised by a body which, perhaps, will take precedence of the A.T.N.A. by which those nurses are not recognised at the present time. The nurses ask us to say they hope the board will not set a standard lower than that of the A.T.N.A. They also ask that it shall be made illegal for midwifery nurses who have not had a general nurse's training to nurse any but midwifery cases. No person who has not had a general nurse's training can have any knowledge of more difficult cases, such as typhoid. I should be sorry to have a purely midwifery nurse engaged on a difficult typhoid case. All that is asked is that midwifery nurses shall not be allowed to take such cases. Of course, at all times there are likely to be instances where any of us might have to go to the rescue of other human beings.

Mr Teesdale: Any motherly woman can deliver a child just as well as a certificated nurse.

Mrs COWAN: Perhaps, in certain circumstances, but abnormal conditions are likely to arise. Some of us have had experience which the hon. Member could never have, and so we appreciate trained help.

Mr Teesdale: That may be. I have had 35 years experience of a bush district where some very good men have been brought into the world.

Mrs COWAN: The fact of having trained nurses has nothing to do with the emergencies that will arise in the bush. At the present time we are training the right type of nurses to send out into country districts so that women may not be left to suffer in the dreadful way they have suffered in the past.

Mr Lambert: And a lot of those nurses are nothing but cigarette-smoking hussies, who ought not to be allowed into any respectable home.

Mrs COWAN: That may be so, but such cases are few.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 pm.

Mrs COWAN: There seems to be a certain amount of confusion in the minds of some hon. members as to the difference between nurses and trainees. The nurses they speak of in these hospitals are mostly pupil nurses and not nurses at all. In the Perth Public Hospital and other places there are pupil trainees for nursing and the women in charge of them, who are the staff, are the real nurses who have passed their full examination. This Bill in no way interferes with the trainees, because as soon as they have passed their examinations they would also be qualified

nurses, and if they were wise they would register. Some remarks were made in regard to the sisters in the Perth Public Hospital and the staff there remaining so long in their positions so that no one else could get them. It is rather hard that we should not recognise the fact that the positions of matron and sisters in the good hospitals are sought after everywhere as the blue ribbons in the profession. It gives them a recognised status as nothing else does, and enables them to secure permanent work and to occupy a fixed position which they have earned by right. The more satisfactory they are in their positions the better is it for our hospitals, and the better are they able to turn out others to be satisfactory nurses. It seems to me that quite the wrong point of view is taken by some hon. members on that question, more particularly the Minister for Mines. He does not realise that these people have earned their positions, and have just as much right to occupy them as have the heads of Government departments. We had the suggestions from one hon. member that there should be no nurses at all. One's heart can only go out, as a woman and mothers, in utmost sympathy for those women in the backblocks and elsewhere, who are not able to get the attention of other women in certain circumstances, and one's heart also goes out to those men and children who in cases of sickness cannot get the necessary trained care and help. The nurses ask that their profession shall be raised to a certain standard, and that this standard shall be recognised and that they shall be registered, and we should give their claims every consideration. There is a great difference between trained nurses and nurses who are not trained when it comes to a question of illness. There are many private hospitals in which the attention is unsatisfactory because there is not the best type of nurse there or the full complement of trained nurses, that we are obliged to have in our public hospitals to look after patients and the trainees as well. Numbers of women have died through lack of attention and numbers of men and children have also died in the backblocks for want of the care of experienced women.

Mr Latham: Not so very many.

Mrs. COWAN: The number has been comparatively great.

The Minister for Agriculture: What has become of the bush nursing scheme?

Mrs. COWAN: That is going on. We hope to assist the Government hospitals by establishing hostels for women and children who come in for attention, and for men also who come in in cases of emergency when there is no room in the hospital. The object is to keep them in readiness to be passed on to the hospitals. That will afford great relief to women, especially to mothers.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is that to apply to the metropolitan area?

Mrs. COWAN: No. The object of the bush nursing scheme is to establish hostels in conjunction with Government hospitals as far as possible in every small backblock town in order that a satisfactory waiting-place may be created for mothers when they come in and where their children, while they are in hospital, will be looked after, and in cases of illness generally. The patients will then go to the hospital when the time arrives or when the hospital can take them. When they are sufficiently convalescent to come out of the hospital it may be possible to keep them in the hostel alongside the hospital and give them a fair chance of recovery before they go back to their farms. We are making an endeavour to begin by the establishment of one at Wyalkatchem, but £900 a year will not go very far. In this matter Parliament and past Governments have been very much to blame because when Money was available for all sorts of things none of it was devoted to this purpose.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Nurses have been subsidised in country districts for years.

Mrs. COWAN: Nurses were subsidised to such a limited degree that no woman could be expected to take on the work.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: It was not because of that.

The Minister for Agriculture: What has become of the £25,000 donated by the Red Cross fund.

Mrs. COWAN: A sum of £15,000 was sent from the Red Cross fund. Perhaps the Minister will say to what purpose that given to the maternity hospital has been devoted and what has been done with it? The Government have had the Money for 12 months, but not a stone or a brick has yet been laid with it. There was a sum of £10,000 for a maternity hospital, and £15,000 for a bush nursing scheme with which we are endeavouring to do the best that is possible.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Government have had nothing to do with it.

Mrs. COWAN: The Government received £10,000. Why has nothing been done with it?

Mr Deputy Speaker: The hon. member must confine herself to the Bill. This measure has nothing to do with the Red Cross.

Mrs. COWAN: The interjections have led me astray.

Mr Lambert: Led you astray?

Mrs. COWAN: The day has gone by when we should seek to encourage the type of nurses known as Sarah Gamps. In more ways than one that type has done a considerable amount of harm. I am afraid it has in some cases helped to deteriorate the children of the people that type looked after. What we want particularly in connection with this Bill is that we may know that there are qualified women ready and competent everywhere in the State to look after people and endeavour to prevent sickness and illness and provide the attention necessary in maternity cases, which is often enough one of the most serious forms of illness any woman can go through owing to puerperal trouble.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: This has nothing to do with maternity cases.

Mrs. COWAN: This will mean the registration of more or less of all nurses.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: No, we have another Act dealing with maternity cases.

Mrs. COWAN: Most of the nurses look upon maternity as a branch of their profession which they must add to their other training. The best schools of medicine and nursing recognise that. Many nurses who have passed the public hospital examinations are continuing their training so that they may also possess the maternity certificate.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: There are maternity certificates outside of that.

Mrs. COWAN: For nurses to be registered they must be fully qualified. Other nurses may be registered as only qualified for one branch of their profession.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: The Health Act provides for maternity cases.

Mrs. COWAN: I know that. These women can register as competent for everything, which is far more important.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Then they must register for maternity cases.

Mrs. COWAN: Exception has been taken to the payment of fees. Of course that will mean less cost to the country. Nurses are willing to pay fees just as others are willing to pay fees to belong to unions. Of course it is not to be expected that the Australian Trained Nurses' Association will ever be as strong as a union where fees are also charged. I do not object to trade unions charging a fee, but I do not see that there should be any objection to fees being paid in this instance. It is not wrong that this should be done. Training in small hospitals has been spoken of. It is not possible in some small hospitals where such a limited number of cases is taken in the year for a nurse to get the necessary training to enable her to become a properly trained nurse. It is far better that she should not be regarded as fully qualified unless she really is qualified. I know from personal experience and from the personal experience of other women what it means to have in the house

a type of woman who is not properly qualified although she appears to be so, because she comes to the house dressed as a nurse. I remember a case of some friends of mine in which the nurses in a case of serious illness—a maternity case—refused to wash the patient's hands and face for a fortnight much less touch any other part of her body, on the ground that it would be wrong to do so, and that a cold would immediately set in. That woman would be said to be a qualified nurse according to the point of view of some members who do not understand what a qualified nurse really is. I also know of a case where a nurse so called was brought in and was looked upon as a qualified person. It turned out that the contrary was the case. Most of her time was spent in drinking bottles of wine and throwing them into a neighbour's backyard. I have never heard of a properly trained nurse who would do that sort of thing. At any rate I know that it would, if such nurses were registered, be possible to approach the board of officials and have them de-registered. That would be a penalty that would go far towards preventing a recurrence of such a thing. Why is there any objection to the badge and the hospital dress?

Mr O'Loghlen: There is no objection to the badge.

Mrs COWAN: Many hospitals insist upon a definite uniform being worn. Why is it that members want to make it possible for outsiders to wear that particular dress? It is not necessary for a nurse to spend her time in a uniform any more than in wearing her badge. I fail to see why there should be so much anxiety to enable the unregistered nurses to wear both the uniform and the badge which rightly should belong to qualified people.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No one advocated it.

Mrs COWAN: It certainly sounded like it. Members say there is not going to be compulsion about not wearing a badge or not wearing a uniform. It is not intended to force the nurses to wear the uniform and badge except when on duty. I cannot understand the objection.

Mr Lambert: Would not the nurses be asked?

Mrs COWAN: We want to protect the nurses who are practising now. They have asked for it, and the qualified nurses say they particularly wish it to be possible for these nurses now practising their profession who are non-members of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association to be registered within 12 months of the passing of the Act, without passing any examination.

Mr Teesdale: Suppose one was capable in practice and yet not educationally capable: would you have that woman put out of her employment?

Mrs COWAN: No, this will not do her out of her employment. If a woman is registered within a certain period it will enable her to go on practising her profession as before, and there will be no hardship cast upon her.

Mr Teesdale: But if she cannot register because she has not the educational qualifications necessary to go through a lot of professional juggling.

Mrs COWAN: Registration does not necessarily mean that she has to answer all those questions.

Mr Teesdale: She has to pass an examination.

Mrs COWAN: Are young women who are registered now as nurses not exempt by this measure? The qualified women wish it to be understood that they desire that no harm shall be done to the women of the type referred to by the member for Roebourne; these have done good work in the community. They wish to prevent that kind of thing going on indefinitely. As worded this Bill inflicts no hardship on such women, but only protects the qualified woman and enables the public to make their own choice. Therefore I cannot see how this Bill will inflict a hardship on anyone. I support it strongly for the reasons I have given and because the nurses have done such good work and built up a fine profession, and reduced the death rate of the community and given relief to suffering in a most unselfish manner.

Mr Lambert: (Coolgardie) [7.48]: We are undoubtedly dealing with a very noble profession, but there are nurses and nurses practising at the present time. As a matter of fact the nursing profession has a right to reasonable protection, but I was rather struck with the horse sense displayed by the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) in his references to the desire at the present time to hedge around every calling with a board, some "ring water" preference, and then to be governed by a lot of needless regulations. We have a Nurses Bill, and immediately underneath it on the Notice Paper we have an Architects Bill. Some of the architects here are not even fit to design an ordinary lean-to or a skillion, and yet—

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is a reflection on the architects.

Mr Lambert: I do not know that the hon. member has any right to usurp the functions of the Chair.

Mr Deputy Speaker: The Hon. member might confine his remarks to the Bill before the House.

Mr Lambert: I believe the time has arrived when Parliament should show some resentment to the incessant clamouring on the part of all sections of the community to be created into some sort of "ring water" preference association.

Mr McCallum Smith: You mean "rose water" preference.

Mr Lambert: Yes, "rose water." They desire to be protected by Parliament and to be governed by all sorts of exclusive regulations.

Mrs COWAN: Trades unionists are protected; why should not the women and nurses be protected as well?

Mr Lambert: There is no more analogy between the two than there is any semblance of common sense in the interjection of the hon. member. The Bill will create what we may call an exclusive association of nurses. It will be created in the first place by people virtually of their own profession, and I will attempt to show that the medical profession will see to it that it is made as exclusive body as possible. It will be seen by the personnel of the board of examiners that the board will be composed of practically medical practitioners, and they will see that no more nurses are admitted as registered nurses than they can possibly help. I think that Parliament would be well advised to call a halt in the case of all those people who are clamouring to create all kinds of boards to protect their own particular calling.

Mrs COWAN: Why should they not have those boards?

Mr Lambert: They have an absolute right to form themselves into an association to promote their own particular or peculiar interests just as the hon. member stated a little while ago that trades unionists had a right to join a union.

Mrs COWAN: And to register that union.

Mr Lambert: It would be better if the member for Roebourne interjected, for then he would drown the voice of the member for North Perth. At least I would be able to hear the interjection. There is too much of this centring around the metropolitan area. No wonder there are complaints on every hand that people are crowding into the populated centres. This is an inducement to young girls, who may probably desire to get a training in some of the district hospitals, to come to Perth. These girls may say that they will not be looked upon as qualified nurses unless they do so. Then, once we give a board such as that proposed to be established power to make regulations to govern matters of the description set out, we will find that preferences will be centred in the metropolitan area. My friend the member for West Perth may shake her wise head, but I can assure her it would not be human nature if it were not so. If I were a young nurse and desired to become registered, I should make a big endeavour to get into one of the larger hospitals, where probably I would get not only a knowledge of nursing but probably also a knowledge of the board of examiners, which is a very essential thing in a lot of these matters. We find that the board of

examiners of medical practitioners desire not only to invade this arena, but they are desirous of invading the dental profession and other professions.

The Colonial Secretary: The Act does not say that they will be medical practitioners.

Mr Munsie: It says two of them will be.

The Colonial Secretary: No.

Mr Lambert: I was wrong in referring to the board. The board of examiners, to which I should have referred, will be appointed by the Executive Council on the recommendation of the board. I do not think the Minister would take it upon himself to appoint the board of examiners for that purpose. Parliament should not tolerate this board or any board whatever making regulations. The widest possible scope should be given to girls who desire to become trained nurses, particularly in the country districts. Unless there is some provision which will enable such girls to enter what I consider is a noble profession, I will vote against the second reading of the Bill. If the member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) desires to see a higher standard set for the nursing profession, she can do so. It has been rightly pointed out that trades unionists and a lot of other people have endeavoured to do the same thing, but to ask Parliament to put its imprint upon them and make the nursing profession exclusive, while at the same time excluding many noble women who are doing yeoman work in the country districts to a greater extent than do those nurses in the metropolitan area, is going too far.

Mrs COWAN: Quite a lot of those women in the country are trained nurses.

Mr Lambert: That is so. It was opportune that the member for Forrest should point out the stupidity of regulations governing the wearing of uniforms. There are plenty of girls earning a good, honest living as nurses in dental institutions. For the sake of cleanliness and neatness, and I admit in some cases with a tinge of that vanity which is common to the sex, they desire to garb themselves in the trim and neat uniform of the trained nurse. These girls are certainly not trained nurses but are dental assistants.

Mrs COWAN: Do you think they should wear the uniform of a properly recognised hospital?

Mr Lambert: I do not know that any properly regulated hospital has the exclusive right to a uniform any more than the so-called gentlemen of today have to wear the frock coat and belltopper. I presume the member for West Perth would look upon a working man who wore a frock coat and a belltopper with disapproval.

Mrs COWAN: No, I would not.

Mr Angelo: As a matter of fact, the working man can best afford it nowadays.

Mr Lambert: And most of them would look better in frock coats and belltoppers than the member for Gascoyne. On reflection, I think this is a matter that the Minister may see fit, if the Bill passes the second reading stage, to remedy in Committee. The very fact of allowing registered trained nurses to wear a badge would be sufficient for the purposes he has in view.

Mrs COWAN: Would you not debar anyone else from wearing it?

Mr Lambert: I would debar them from wearing the badge.

Mr O'Loughlen: Any unauthorised person wearing the badge would be liable to prosecution under the Bill.

Mrs COWAN: Do you object to them wearing the recognised garb of a hospital?

Mr Marshall: You would debar the rest of the community from wearing that garb at all. You want to keep it for the one section of the community.

Mr Lambert: As a matter of fact, if we go on at this rate we will have soon a flappers' association coming to the House and asking us to debar stupid old women from wearing short skirts and that sort of thing.

Mrs COWAN: I will support them if they come to us for that.

NURSES REGISTRATION BILL IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 7 December 1921

Hansard p. 2202.

Resumed from the 18th October; Mr Stubbs in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—Who may be registered as nurses:

The Chairman: The member for North-East Fremantle had moved the following amendment—

Subclause 2, line 4—strike out the words “recognised by the board”.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: This is an amendment we were discussing when we reported progress.

The Colonial Secretary: Will you withdraw it?

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I should think not. The subclause means that if a young girl had put in three years training at the Northam Hospital ten years ago or so, and holds a certificate to the effect that she is a properly trained nurse, and that girl is today earning her livelihood as a trained nurse, she will be debarred from continuing practice, if the Northam Hospital is not recognised by the board as a proper hospital for the training of nurses.

Hansard pp. 2204 - 2206.

Mr Teesdale: If the warmth displayed by the Minister in connection with country nurses and hospitals is any criterion to the warmth likely to be displayed by the board, then country nurses will have a bad time. I have had experience in country hospitals, having undergone serious operations in those institutions, and all I can say is that I have had the best of treatment from the doctors, matron and nurses. The Minister is not right in speaking disparagingly of the nurses as he has done. It does not follow that because a nurse may not be wearing crepe de chine or silk that she is not respectable. It is quite possible that country womenfolk know as much about attending an unfortunate man as a nurse in a bigger town, and it does not follow that because a girl has been in an institution with a few beds that she has not gained as much experience as a cog in the wheel of one of the big hospitals. It happens very often that two or three girls are singled out for important operations.

Mrs COWAN: They all take their turn.

Mr Teesdale: Their turns do not come too often. I consider that those girls are entitled to have every consideration shown them.

Mrs COWAN: I agree with the Minister about not amending Clause 5, but I do not agree about amending Clauses 2 or 3, because it seems to me that Clause 5 applies to a section of the nurses that it is desired shall be controlled, and which nurses must be trained in a place recognised by the board. If we leave out the words “recognised by the board” in Clauses 2 and 3 they would make it all right for the others.

The Chairman: We are only dealing with one amendment at a time and that amendment relates to Subclause 1.

Mrs COWAN: Well, of course, if I may not say any more on that subject, then I shall not. I do not think there is any feeling against nurses trained in country hospitals, but we must recognise that a nurse cannot get the same training in a small country hospital that she can get in a big hospital which has a number of different wards, and where they devote a long period of time to training in each particular section. If we make further amendments, we can make the position perfectly just and right for all sections.

The Minister for Works: The best engineers the world has ever seen were trained in small shops.

Mrs COWAN: Engineers and nurses are hardly on the same footing. If the Minister for Works thinks so, I can only say it is a great pity he was not born a woman. I too desire to give nurses in private hospitals a chance, and I want to see that we provide for those women who have had no training at all. It seems to me, however, that under the Bill they are provided for, and that they can register if they can pass an examination.

The Minister for Works: The best engineers the world has ever seen were trained in small shops where they were well looked after by good men. Therefore I will not subscribe to the statement that because a nurse may have been trained in a small hospital, she may not be able to carry out her work as well as a nurse trained in a bigger institution. I know that at timber mills, on railway contracts and on public works generally where many men are employed—

Mrs COWAN: Would you call nursing a public work in that sense?

The Minister for Works: Yes, and a public work that should be respected too. I am grateful to the nurses I have met in different parts of Australia and I have met those who without having been trained in a hospital knew exactly what to do in an emergency. In small engineering shops men who are being trained have to do all kinds of work and they do that work thoroughly because they know the boss's eye is on them. In big engineering shops they are put on to special work. We should be very careful we do not throw obstacles in the way of those who have to get their training in small country hospitals.

Mr Money: I am not quite sure whether the Minister or members have read this clause carefully. The first subclause sets out ".....As a nurse in a hospital or" something else. That something else is an establishment recognised by the board. Everything depends on how this is read. "Or something else" means some alternative.

The Colonial Secretary: So long as it is recognised by the board.

Mr Money: The alternative is a training establishment recognised by the board.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: You cannot read it that way.

Mr Money: If the word "and" were there, it would mean both. The word "or" is used, and that means either. Clearly, an alternative is given to "hospital", and that alternative is some institution recognised by the board, not necessarily a hospital at all. I read the clause as I find it.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: You find no stop there.

Mr Money: I find the alternative "or". Pass the clause as it is, and I guarantee that in any court in Western Australia I will get it for both.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Never!

Mr Davies: One does not like differing with a professional man, but I hold the clause can be read in a different way from that put forward by the member for Bunbury. The retention of the words "recognised by the board" is hardly so important as the Minister would have us believe. By what

right shall a board not yet in existence declare, say next June, to girls who have finished their training today, and are recognised today, that they must prove to the satisfaction of the board that they have received certain instruction? That is indeed retrospective legislation.

Mr Money: I wish to move a further amendment, namely, to insert between the words "or" and "training," in line 4, the words "in a".

The Chairman: I cannot accept that amendment except with the consent of the mover of the amendment before the Chair.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I do not agree to that, because I maintain that a nurse should pass an examination, no matter where she was trained.

Mr Money: Apparently the whole standing of the board is at stake, in the opinion of the Committee. If that is so, the Committee has no right to confer any powers whatever upon the board. If the board are not competent to declare what shall be a recognised training establishment, we had better have no board, and let the legal position of nurses remain what it is. From this tendency of Parliament to interfere in matters that hon. members are not qualified to deal with, many of our present troubles have sprung. If we constitute a board at all, we should leave this matter to the board.

Mr McCallum: It seems to me that the member for Bunbury entirely misunderstands the amendment, which does not involve any question of confidence in the board, but a question as to limiting the scope within which nurses can become registered. Say we have 100 nurses upwards of 21 years of age trained all over the State; then the board, upon being appointed, could say to them, "We will set you an examination to pass, but we will admit to that examination only those of you who have had your training in hospitals of which we approve".

Mr Mann: Do not you approve of that?

Mr McCallum: No. Why not widen the scope, instead of limiting it? Let there be the widest possible opportunity for registration of nurses having the necessary qualifications.

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result: -

Ayes	27
Noes	10

Majority for	..	17
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AYES

Mr Angelo
Mr Angwin
Mr Boyland
Mr Carter
Mr Corboy
Mr Davies
Mr Gibson
Mr Heron
Mr Hickmott
Mr Johnston
Mr Lambert
Mr Lutey
Mr C C Maley

Mr Marshall
Mr McCallum
Mr Munsie
Mr Pickering
Mr J H Smith
Mr J M Smith
Mr Teesdale
Mr Thomson
Mr Troy
Mr Underwood
Mr Willcock
Mr O'Loughlen
(Teller)

Mr Brown
Mrs Cowan
Mr George
Mr H K Maley
Mr Mann

Sir James Mitchell
Mr Money
Mr Piesse
Mr J Thomson
Mr Mullany
(Teller)

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 14 December 1921

Hansard pp. 2400-2401.

Amendment thus passed.

Progress reported.

Resumed from 18th October; Mr Munsie in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: When last the Bill was before us, I moved an amendment, that in line 4 of Subclause 2 "recognised by the board" be struck out. I do not wish to discuss the point any further.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause 4 "recognised by the board" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause 4 "recognised by the board" be struck out.

Mr SAMPSON: The principle here is entirely different. I am opposed to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr MacCallum SMITH: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause (5):—"Every person who has attained the age of twenty-six years and who at the passing of this Act is practising as a nurse and has continuously done so for not less than five years before the passing of this Act in Western Australia, may, until the 30th day of June, 1922, be registered as a trained nurse on payment of the prescribed fee."

My object is to provide for every person who has been practising as a nurse.

Mr Mann: How are you to define "practising"?

Hon P. Collier: Or "nurse"? A Sairey Gamp might be qualified under this.

Mr MacCallum SMITH: I think that most uncalled for. Many deserving women in the bush are performing excellent services amongst the sick. It would be an injustice to debar them from obtaining a certificate.

Mr Mann: We are not debarring them from practising, only from being called trained nurses.

Mr MacCallum SMITH: And it is most unfair. It means that nobody would engage them. We have made similar concessions in respect of chemists, dentists, veterinary surgeons, and managing

clerks for legal firms. In each of those instances we have recognised that there are persons who could not pass the qualified examination, but who nevertheless are doing good work. This legislation will deprive some of those nurses of their livelihood, unless we make special provision for them.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I scarcely think the hon. member is serious in his amendment. I hope the Committee will not agree to it. The Bill does not prevent any practising nurse from continuing to practice. I pointed that out on the second reading. The hon. Member says it applies to registered nurses. But there is nothing in the amendment about registered nurses; it will include anybody who is practising and has been practising for five years. We have today nurses who are not competent to be registered, but who nevertheless have been practising for 10 years.

Mrs COWAN: I do not quite understand the amendment. The hon. Member refers to any person who at the passing of the Act is practising as a nurse. What kind of nurse does he mean? I might have had a nurse for my children for the past five years, and so, under the amendment, she would be entitled to apply to be registered as a trained nurse. We require a definition of "nurse".

Mr CORBOY: I hope the new subclause will be added. Anyone who is qualified should be entitled to be registered and classed as a registered nurse. A similar provision applies to dentists. If the amendment is not made, we shall have registered nurses and nurses who are permitted to practise. This will be detrimental to the latter class.

Mr PICKERING: We should afford the same facilities under this Bill as have been afforded under other bills of a similar nature. A stigma may be cast upon those nurses who are not allowed to be registered but who have been practising. The Minister might accept the amendment with some qualification with regard to "trained nurse".

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	..	..	27

Majority against .. 13

Ayes	
Mr Chesson	Mr Piesse
Mr Davies	Mr J.H. Smith
Mr Heron	Mr Stubbs
Mr Johnston	Mr Teesdale
Mr Lambert	Mr A Thomson
Mr O'Loughlen	Mr Troy
Mr Pickering	Mr Corboy
Noes	

Mr Angelo
Mr Angwin
Mr Boyland
Mr Broun
Mr Clydesdale
Mr Collier
Mr Cowan
Mr Denton
Mr Durack
Mr George
Mr Gibson
Mr Harrison
Mr Hickmott
Mr Lutey

Mr C.C. Maley
Mr H K Maley
Mr Mann
Mc McCallum
Sir James Mitchell
Mr Money
Mr Richardson
Mr Sampson
Mr Simons
Mr Underwood
Mr Willcock
Mr Wilson
Mr Mullany
(Teller)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

PENSIONER'S RATES (RATES EXEMPTION) BILL

Edith Cowan spoke in favour of a Bill to permit pensioner's to have their local council rates remitted in certain circumstances.

PENSIONER'S RATES (RATES EXEMPTION) BILL SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 28 September 1922
Hansard p 949.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [9.28]: I intend to support the second reading. I am glad the Bill has been brought down. I have known some very unfortunate cases. There is certainly something wrong with the system that permits of such things. It is all very well to say the Minister can remit, but I should like to know how often the Minister does remit. But before it gets to that stage, those unfortunate people have to undergo the humiliation of taking steps for relief, which brings home to them the fact that they are in dependence on the community. Very often, too, they are quite nice people, overtaken by misfortune. It is a perfectly right and just Bill, and we should support its principles as we would also support the amendment indicated by the member for North-East Fremantle. I am glad this debate has taken place, because it will show those unfortunate people—nobody has ever put it to them before; I myself did not know of it—that if they go to the Minister they can, after much trouble, have their rates remitted. I should like to know how many cases have been remitted, and why it is not made easier for those people to reach the department with the requests for remission and be quickly replied to, instead of having the humiliation of awaiting the decision and feeling anxious and miserable while they are so waiting. I strongly commend the member for Leederville for bringing in the Bill, and I shall certainly support it.

PERPETUAL EXECUTORS, TRUSTEES AND AGENCY COMPANY (PRIVATE) BILL

Edith Cowan supported the Bill to establish the Perpetual Trustee Company. As this would overcome an existing monopoly she believed the resultant competition would promote efficiency in administration.

PERPETUAL EXECUTORS, TRUSTEES, AND AGENCY COMPANY (PRIVATE) BILL

Legislative Assembly, 18 January 1923

Hansard pp 2703-2704

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [9.32]: I support the Bill. I was greatly surprised to hear the remarks which have fallen from the members of the Opposition. It is astonishing that so many of them should wish to continue a monopoly. It will be a very good thing for the community to have the Perpetual Trustee Company established, as it will afford great assistance to many people. There are people, who will not deal with the other company, waiting now to put their money into this company, and why should not they be considered? The directors of the WA Company do not object to the establishment of this company. They realise that there may be some competition in the matter of efficiency, but efficiency in the administration of the business affairs of such large numbers of people can only be highly advantageous. I am not opposed to the appointment of a public trustee, but I am a little surprised that members of the Opposition who listened to the remarks of their Leader last year should think such a department could be of any great efficacy. We have only two forms of trusteeship of a public kind, and one of them is the lunacy trusteeship.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: This is a lunacy trusteeship, too.

Mrs COWAN: If for that reason only, I should have expected the Opposition to support this Bill, because it would have prevented what happened in a case which evoked such strictures from the Leader of the Opposition, strictures with which I entirely agreed. That was a case of which we all know, and it was anything but satisfactory. It was not conducive to encouraging the public to entrust their business to State administration.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: That will not apply to this Bill.

Mrs COWAN: I do not say that it will, but members have advocated a public trustee instead of this company or with it. Let them have a public trusteeship by all means. But it surprised me to hear that advocated from the Opposition after having heard the very strong remarks against the public management of the affairs of certain lunatics. I agreed with those remarks at the time, and I still agree with them. I supported the action to have justice done in the case of that individual, and my support would have been forthcoming this session had not illness prevented me from being in my place. It has been said that this company is going to take people from the country. We need not worry about that contention. There are plenty of people who can be employed by this company, and it seems to me they will come from the town and will assist people in the country to take care of the tremendous amount of money our primary producers are supposed to make. I am not sure that they make so much money; they may hold the value in land and not in cash, but if they have the cash, they will in future have two trusteeships from which to choose the more efficient to take charge of their affairs. I shall support the second reading.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: (North-East Fremantle) [9.40]: Western Australia has a very small population and it is fruitless to make comparisons with a country like England in regard to trustee companies. On one occasion I heard a gentleman refer to a trading company in this State and another in England as being in the ratio of a flea to an elephant when the relative populations were considered. A public trusteeship has been advocated, not only by members of the Labour Party but by men in public positions and legal men. The proposal has been brought before the public on several occasions and has received approval. If we permit another private company to start operations now while our population is small, its vested interests will become so great that we shall be building up strong opposition against the day when we inaugurate a public trusteeship. We cannot fairly contrast the number of companies in this State and the other States where the population is much larger. Those who are desirous of having their funds protected by a public trustee under the Government will not have an opportunity to avail themselves of those facilities, because private companies have come into existence, and to start a public trusteeship may not

be a payable proposition. I regret that the member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) referred to the public trustee in connection with the Lunacy Department. Unfortunately, that official had died prior to the charge being laid against him.

Mrs COWAN: I did not refer to any administration.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: The hon member did. The official had been dead a considerable time before any inquiry was made. I had an opportunity to look into that question and I have grave doubts whether that official was lax in his administration.

Mrs COWAN: I never said so. I was pointing out what a member on your side said. It came from the Leader of the Opposition.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE BILL

Edith Cowan used this debate to briefly argue that she did not believe that members of Parliament should receive pecuniary gain for Public Works committee work. The latter committee was not strictly a Select or Standing Committee of the Parliament.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE BILL

COMMITTEE STAGE

Legislative Assembly, 9 November 1921
Hansard p. 1597.

Mrs. COWAN: I am not in favour of members being paid for work which should be rendered as part of their ordinary parliamentary duties. We were not brought here in the expectation of receiving extra pay for work that will amount to that of ordinary select committee work. I support the member for Roebourne and the member for Gascoyne in their attitude on this question. If members have the necessary ability and are competent to do the work they should be allowed to do it for out of pocket expenses, at all events for the first 12 months, or until they have proved that they have suffered such a pecuniary loss as a result of the services they have rendered that they cannot do it further without payment.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS BILL

Edith Cowan spoke in support of the Redistribution Bill. Commendation was made of the Commissioners. However, she expressed her reservations about continued malapportionment of the Western Australian electoral system. Again she argued for the educative benefits of compulsory voting.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 20 September 1923

Hansard pp. 786-787.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [5.30]: It has been extremely interesting to listen to the debate on the Bill. One realises what perfect constituencies we should have had if only we had been consulted in regard to the boundaries, and in respect of what is known as community of interest. I feel that my own constituency could, in this manner, have been made a perfectly safe one for all time. Although many of us are not satisfied with the work of the Commission, I deprecate strongly the criticism that has been levelled against the members of the Commission who dealt with the matter. Two of them are civil servants—indeed the three of them are civil servants—and it would appear that they are not able to do anything that will give satisfaction to this House. I am convinced that the three Commissioners did their very best in this matter and that at any rate they tried to do what was right. I hardly like to think, even, of the suggestion made more than once in this Chamber that influence was brought to bear on one of the Commissioners. The metropolitan area is entitled to many more seats than it has. Three to one in quota has always been regarded as the proportion allotted, that is to say, we in the metropolitan area represent three people to one represented outside that area. That, however, does not give us the one vote we value that we hear so much about in this House. The member for Claremont (Mr J Thomson) has just shown us that in many cases it means nine votes for one value. Nevertheless, I think, members are to blame in the matter. I do not know how many helped, as every one of us was asked to help, the Commissioners. The Electoral Department sent notices to members asking them to assist to put names on the roll and to see that they were in correct order. It was in the interests of members to do that, and those who did not comply with the request suffered. In fact, even those who did, suffered, the member for Perth (Mr Mann) and myself amongst the number, although we did try to help in every way possible. I am very sorry that we cannot have compulsory voting in connection with this Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: A Bill to provide for that could be introduced this session.

Mrs COWAN: I wish we could do so. As one who has done a lot of canvassing I realise that compulsory voting would be very valuable for stirring up political interest. Compulsory enrolment does not enable us to sit back and say we have no duties in the matter of getting voters on the roll, nor does it enable us to say that we should not help our electoral officers in the way of getting the electors to do their duty to the country and to themselves. We have heard a great deal directly and indirectly with regard to the amount of favouritism shown in the Bill towards this side of the House. That is not so, because it favours this side so much less than it does the Opposition side.

The Premier: Only the juvenile members of the House have said that.

Mrs COWAN: We must consider the bill from the point of view of the general good and accept it as a Bill which is as fair as it can be made. I intend to support the second reading.

Hon. P. Collins: This is a soft of Salvation Army meeting today—everybody is testifying. Capt. Carter will now testify.

STATE CHILDREN'S ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Edith Cowan strongly supported the provisions of the Bill, some of which she had advocated for many years. She thought it was 'obsolete' to treat children on the same basis as adults in police court matters. In Committee she successfully moved two amendments to the Bill. One amendment gave the Children's Court discretionary powers over the penalties to be imposed if parents failed to pay fines imposed on their children. Another amendment prevented a conviction in a Children's Court being used against a person in adulthood.

STATE CHILDREN'S ACT AMENDMENT BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 12 October 1921

Hansard pp. 1184 - 1185.

Mrs. COWAN: (West Perth) [7.55]: I strongly support the Bill and I hope the House will deal with it from the points of view which have been put forward by the previous speaker. It is really very important in the interests of the children of the State that we should regard these questions from a standpoint different from that of an ordinary court. The idea of treating children on ordinary police court lines has become obsolete, and we wish now to do as much as possible in the way of reform. Take Clause 10 which provides a case in point. At the present time the court must impose a fine. That is why we desire to strike out the words "any child". In one case not long ago, had it not been for Mr Lovekin, who was sitting on the bench, the woman who was before the court must have been sent to prison because she had no means of paying the child's fine, and being the mother there was no one else to pay it. That kind of thing has happened more than once. I do not think members of the bench should be placed in the position of being compelled to put their hands in their pockets. If the mother fails to pay the child's fine, a writ of execution must be issued, and if the fine be not paid three days imprisonment must be awarded for every one pound or less. Then every time the woman fails to pay, the court must go on adding to the sentence. Only the other day Mr Lovekin paid a woman's fine. In fact he has done so on other occasions. This woman was receiving 34s a week from the State to keep herself and five children. Will anybody tell me that that woman was in a position to pay a fine, even though that fine was one of a shilling? As a matter of fact it was 8s.

Mr O'LOGHLEN: They are refusing even that 34s next week.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not true.

Mrs COWAN: By exercising the words I have quoted that kind of thing will be prevented from happening. It is harsh to a degree, and detrimental to family life if a woman has to be sent to prison. The only alternative is for the bench to pay the fine so that the mother may not have to go to prison. It seems to us an extremely cruel thing that because a child has been fined for perhaps only a breach of a municipal by-law that that child should not be given a chance even though it be not a first offender. A child may be accused of having rung the neck of a duck, or cut a few letters on a tree in the park, or picked wild flowers more than once. We must remember that these offenders are very young and we should regard them as wards in chancery rather than criminals. Very often they are only troublesome children who have not had much chance, and I do not think that we should stigmatise them as criminals for the rest of their lives. If they are really bad they will continue so even after they reach 18. And the offences which appear in the records may then be used against them and create great prejudice. We should give them a clean sheet from the time when they reach the age of 18 years for whatever they have done in the past. It is hard enough for people to be punished for the sins of their parents. Why should we punish children for what they have done—after all they are still only children up to the age of 18—and thus carry their youthful misdeeds on to be a stigma against them for the rest of their lives? After all, many of the so-called sins are not of a serious nature. It is not fair to them and it is not the right way to deal with the question. I hope the House will support the Bill and pass it practically as printed. It is my intention to withdraw one of the amendments I have placed upon the Notice Paper.

Mr SIMON: Which one?

Mrs COWAN: The second one.

Mr SPEAKER: That can be done at the Committee stage.

IN COMMITTEE

Legislative Assembly, 12 October 1921

Hansard p. 1189.

Mrs COWAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 8 the words "by any child" be struck out.

Hon. W.C. ANGWIN: If a child is convicted and fined the child is not imprisoned. If a fine is not paid but is passed on to the parent and the parent is not in a position to pay, then imprisonment follows. Some objection has been raised to the deletion of these words because of their probable effect in connection with the Education Act. If a parent neglected to see that children attended school, the magistrate would take care that proper penalties were imposed. In many instances parents are not in a position to pay fines, and the discretionary power should be left to the court. It would be possible to achieve the same object in another way, namely by appealing to the Executive Council to have the fine remitted, but that procedure would cost more than the amount of the fine.

Mr MUNSIE: Will the amendment give the discretionary power to the bench?

Mrs COWAN: Yes.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I cannot see that the amendment will make any difference. The court will be able to ascertain the circumstances of the parent and may administer a caution instead of imposing a fine. If the amendment is passed parents guilty of a breach of the Education Act might escape without penalty and continue to neglect to send their children to school.

Mrs COWAN: Section 28 of the Act provides that no child shall be liable to imprisonment for neglect to pay a fine but shall be liable to be sent to an institution, and an institution is put to the expense of keeping a child for a term equal to the term of imprisonment.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It seems to me that the amendment will carry us no further. Section 28 imposes certain obligations upon the court and the clause as printed will achieve the object the hon. member has in view.

Hon. W.C. ANGWIN: The clause as printed applies not to the parent but to the child. If the amendment is passed the clause will apply to the parent as well as to the child. That is the legal explanation of the effect of the amendment.

Mr RICHARDSON: I think the amendment will defeat what the mover desires. If a child is fined for a misdemeanour, the clause as printed will mean that no execution can be issued on either the parent or the child. The striking out of the words proposed to be deleted would defeat the very end which the member for West Perth desires to attain.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 17a;

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: For the reasons which I have already given on the second reading, I must vote against this clause.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 5 to 13—agreed to.

New clause:

Mrs COWAN: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 14: "Whenever any child who has been committed to the care of the State or who has been committed to an institution or who has been convicted under this Act attains the age of 18 years, the fact of such committal or conviction shall not be admissible as evidence in any court of law. Any official or other person who makes public or is privy to making public, the fact that any child has been committed or convicted under this Act shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence. Penalty: One hundred pounds.

Mr MULLANY: While supporting the first part of the new clause, I think the second part goes altogether too far. Where will that second part lead us to? It may result in people being prosecuted, and fined as much as £100, for mere gossip.

Mr SIMONS: We could now give you four cases in which convictions would be obtained.

Mr MULLANY: No case has been put up for passing the second part of the new clause.

Mr MANN: I move an amendment on the new clause—

That between the words "who" and "makes" in line 8, there be inserted "wilfully".

Mr SIMONS: That amendment would make it too hard to obtain convictions.

Mr MANN: I do not think so. As an ex-official I know how these records have to be handled. The absence of the word "willfully" would leave officials and others in a very awkward position.

Hon. W.C. ANGWIN: I hope the Committee will carry the amendment.

Mrs COWAN: I am ready to accept it.

Hon. W.C. ANGWIN: There have been cases in this city where the former employer of a girl or boy has deliberately communicated to a later employer the fact of an offence having been committed by the girl or boy, with the result that the child lost its employment. A similar provision to this has been found necessary in America.

Amendment on the new clause put and passed; the new clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TRUSTEE EXECUTOR
AND AGENCY COMPANY LTD ACT
AMENDMENT
(PRIVATE) BILL**

Edith Cowan strongly opposed a clause being inserted in the Bill to give the Western Australian Trustee, Executor and Agency Company Limited the right to sell or transfer mortgage or other securities to itself as trustee.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TRUSTEE, EXECUTOR AND AGENCY COMPANY LTD, ACT AMENDMENT (PRIVATE) BILL, COMMITTEE STAGE

Legislative Assembly, 6 December 1923
Hansard p. 1908.

Clause 15 - Company may sell or transfer mortgage or other securities to itself as trustee:

Mr CUNNINGHAM: Will the member for Perth tell us what this clause means?

Mr Mann: It speaks for itself.

Mr CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member has offered no explanation. We are entitled to know what it means.

Mrs COWAN: This clause will establish a dangerous precedent. We had a similar Bill before us last year. It was carefully considered and was up to date in its powers. A clause like the one we are now considering, however, was not included. The more we think about it the more we realise how dangerous it might prove. We want to be careful to see that the position is safeguarded, that nothing can be done without the approval of the Supreme Court. That has been done. In these circumstances of course it is quite possible to trust any company, and therefore I feel it makes it possible to support the Bill as it now is.

Mr Lambert: A nice sort of back-handed compliment.

Mr Mann: I will not press the clause.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 16 — negatived.

Clause 17 — Orders of court subject to appeal:

Hon. W.C. Angwin: We must retain this clause; every person should have the right of appeal.

Mr Cunningham: What is the intention of the member in charge of the Bill?

Mr Mann: A similar clause was included in the Bill dealing with the other company last year. The clause should be permitted to stand.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble. Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

WHEAT MARKETING BILL

Edith Cowan, in giving support to legislation to continue the operation of the Wheat Pool, spoke of the often overlooked hardships faced by women in many rural settings.

WHEAT MARKETING BILL

SECOND READING

Legislative Assembly, 15 September 1921
Hansard pp 802-803.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [9.43]: It seems to be in the order of things that everyone should speak on the second reading of this measure. Perhaps I might bring under the notice of members the fact that there is a woman's side to this question, and particularly do I wish to bring this under the notice of members of the Country Party. The Leader of the Opposition was very good in the way in which he stated the case, and I feel that he is acting in entirely the right spirit towards this question. However, no one seems to have stressed the fact that there is a tremendous amount of poverty and unemployment prevailing at present, and that the women of the community are finding it very hard to make both ends meet in the matter of providing their children with satisfactory food. I speak advisedly, because I know of more than one case of this kind. The fact of having to pay the present prices for milk, butter, cheese and bread, because of the price of wheat, is a terrible drag on and a very serious matter for those women who have to make the best of their husband's incomes cannot save anything out of their house allowances.

Mr Hickmott: Butter and cheese are fairly cheap just now.

Mrs COWAN: We should support the member for North-East Fremantle in what he said. The principle is a right one, and we should if possible save as a result of this Bill by reducing expenses instead of increasing them. Nothing can be done unless the people are behind it, and the wheat pool cannot be continued without the support of the people. I give my support to the second reading of the Bill as well as to the continuance of the pool. I also appreciate the position of the farmers. I have conversed with many young farmers who have been struggling along and endeavouring to do their best. If these men fall into the hands of local acquiring agents they will not be able to continue their business, and many farms must be shut down. That would be a grave mistake and would not help the community in any way. We should also remember the advice of the Leader of the Opposition with regard to a better control of our food supplies. I only rose to speak because I feel it is not right to let this matter pass without saying something on the women's side of the question. We women have a right to be remembered sometimes on a matter of this sort. The farmers especially should bear in mind the words of Lowell —

It is not a knowing kind of cattle
That is ketched with mouldy corn.

We have in a sense been kept far too long on mouldy corn, and have not been considered in the way that we should have been considered. I believe the Country Party will realise that there are more sides to this question than merely getting a good price for their wheat.

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS

(Chronological)

State Children and Charities, 2 August 1921.
Stock at Northern Ports, 11 August 1921.
Esperance Railway and Jetty, 11 August 1921.
Rottneet Island, Accommodation, 25 August 1921
Speakers' Gallery: Privileges of Women, 20 September, 1921
Hospital for the Insane: Accommodation for Patients, 21 September 1921.
Hospital for the Insane: The Hospital Dairy, 21 September 1921.
State Children Department, 21 September 1921.
Hotel Metropole, Sewage, 27 September 1921.
King Edward Hospital, Employee, 27 September 1921.
Esplanade Fair Grounds, 27 September 1921.
Hospital for the Insane, Royal Commission, 4 October 1921.
Oil Prospecting Areas, 19 October 1921.
Avon Valley Lands Unused, 19 October 1921.
Hospital for the Insane, Royal Commission (Case of F. Cunningham), 30 November 1921.
Juvenile Gambling, 7 December 1921.
Lotteries and Sweeps, 9 August 1922.
Sewerage, West Perth, 9 August 1922.
Forests Commission, 9 August 1922.
Railways, Overhead Bridge, Melbourne Road, 13 September 1922.
Forests Commission, Report, 5 October 1922.
Wheat for Home Gristing, 7 December 1922.
Electoral, Compulsory Voting, 9 January 1923.
Medical Care and Maternity Cases, 20 September 1923.

QUESTION: STATE CHILDREN AND CHARITIES.
Legislative Assembly, 2 August 1921, Hansard, p. 33

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Is there any reason for withholding the final report of the State Children Department Royal Commission?
2. If not, will he lay the Report on the Table?

The Premier replied:

1. No.
2. The report was laid on the Table during last session

QUESTION: STOCK AT NORTHERN PORTS.
Legislative Assembly, 11 August 1921, Hansard, p. 185.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier : In view of the high ruling prices of meat and the large number of stock available in the northern ports (some 60,000 to 70,000 in the Port Hedland district alone), can the Government offer any assistance or propose any scheme whereby the stock may be brought to market?

The Premier [James Mitchell] replied: I will make full inquiry into the position.

QUESTION: ESPERANCE RAILWAY AND JETTY.
Legislative Assembly, 11 August 1921, Hansard, p. 185.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier: What were the reasons for placing on the Estimates last year the sum of £40,000 for the construction of a jetty at Esperance Bay, and some \$20,000 towards the construction of the railway when the matter had been in abeyance for years, and when our financial condition is at so low an ebb?

The Premier replied:

- (a) No financial provision was made on last year's Estimates for construction of the jetty at Esperance Bay.
- (b) The resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly on 27 February 1918, - 'That in the opinion of this House the first railway to be constructed in pursuance of the programme of railway construction authorised by Parliament should be the Esperance-Northwood line', made it incumbent on the Government to proceed with this railway before the construction of others could be considered.

QUESTION: ROTTNEST ISLAND, ACCOMMODATION.
Legislative Assembly, 25 August 1921, Hansard p. 423-424.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. How many bungalows and flats were allotted to applicants for accommodation for the Rottnest season 1921-22 before the applications closed on the 3rd August?
2. How many personal friends and relations and relations of the officers in charge were allocated bungalows or flats.
3. To whom were the bungalows and flats allotted?

4. How many of the successful applicants for this year were also extended the same privilege last year, and in the years 1918-1919?
5. In view of the policy of the Board of Control to give preference to country and goldfields applicants, what is the proportion of successful town and country applicants?
6. Is a date stamp placed on application when received?
7. If too many applications are received, by what method are the allotments made?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. None.
2. None.
3. Bungalows-Locke, Lappin, Richards, Couper, Campbell, Chandler, Smith, Ranford, Millington, Owston, Toms, Rae, France, Ashby, McDonald, Mountain, Moore, Glew, Norman, Moore, Powell, Nossiter, Vincent, Smith, Connaughton, Membery, Nicholls, Young, Cowden, Lutz, Black, Polan, Simpson, Hale, Thiel, Brodribb. Flats-Parker, Broom, Sloss, Canning, Humphries, Ford, Nankivell, Chidlow, Royce, Harrison, Cullen, Blythe, Herbert, Bennett, Bailey, Rhodes.
4. With the exception of seven all these persons have been tenants of the Board at one period or another during the tourist seasons of 1918-19 and 1919-20.
5. Seventeen applications were received from the country and goldfields, and all were allotted the dates applied to.
6. No.
7. The Allotment is made by the Board.

QUESTION: SPEAKER'S GALLERY: PRIVILEGES OF WOMEN.
Legislative Assembly, 20 September 1921, Hansard, p. 821.

Mr Speaker: The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) has given notice of a question to the Speaker, which will be answered without delay, and which will not appear on the Notice paper her first question is-

With respect to the admission of strangers to the Speaker's gallery, is a member of this House entitled to extend this privilege to women as well as men?

To that question I may answer that it has never been done, and I do not know that it has been done in any of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth.

Mr McCallum: Yes, it has.

Mr Speaker: If it has been done it has been done without my knowledge. The second part of the question says:-

If this not apply to women, under which Standing Order is the position governed?

The standing orders do not control the Speaker's gallery. Tradition has handed down the Speaker's gallery to the Speaker and he allows members to take privileged guests to seats in the Speaker's gallery. The member for West Perth is on the same footing as any other hon. Member. No member is privileged to ask a lady to take a seat in the Speaker's gallery. On the other hand, the member for West Perth has the right to take gentlemen to the Speaker's gallery.

Mrs Cowan: Am I in order in moving that your ruling be disagreed with?

Mr Speaker: I have not given a ruling; I have simply told the hon. Member what is the position. If the house decides otherwise I cannot help it. The Speaker's gallery has been handed down to the Speaker and is controlled by him, and I am doing what previous Speakers have done.

Mr Corboy: I would like to ask, Mr Speaker, without notice, if you will extend the same privilege to ladies as is extended to gentlemen.

Mr Speaker: I have already answered that question.

Mr Corboy: I am asking if you will extend the same privileges.

Mr Speaker: I answer, "No".

QUESTION: STATE CHILDREN DEPARTMENT.

Legislative Assembly, 21 September 1921, Hansard p. 858

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: In view of the widespread interest being taken not only in this State, but in the Eastern States and in New Zealand, as the result of inquiries made on behalf of Western Australia by the member for North Perth, and the former member for South Fremantle, into the management of State Children Departments in those places, will the Government cause to be printed a limited number of copies of the interim report of the select committee appointed by this House, and the report by the Royal Commission subsequently appointed by the Government to inquire into the management of the State Children of Western Australia?

The Colonial Secretary replied: Yes.

QUESTION: (2)-HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, Accommodation for Patients.

Legislative Assembly, 21 September 1921, Hansard, p. 859.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary :

1. Is there any truth in the rumour that the Government contemplate affording additional accommodation, or providing new buildings for the insane, and that the site which has been favourably reported upon is at Jandakot?
2. Why has not better use been made of the property acquired at Whitby Falls, where a considerable area of good land could be made productive ?
3. In view of the reported over-crowding of the institution at Claremont, would it not be possible to (a) convert the carpenter's shop and the tailor's shop, where at present two men are employed, into wards, and thus provide accommodation for about 40 patients, and (b) remove the six nurses who are present in occupation of the isolation ward available for about 30 patients.
4. Is the institution at Claremont actually overcrowded ?
5. If not, are there any empty beds there, and if so how many?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. Yes.
2. Full use is being made of Whitby. There is no considerable area of good land there.

3. (a) No; the buildings are unsuitable and they are required for the purpose for which they are now being utilised;
(b) there are 20 nurses sleeping in the isolation block and no other accommodation is available for them.
4. Yes. The institution was designed for 727; there are now in residence 1,082; ten day-rooms have been turned into dormitories.
5. Answered by No. 4.

QUESTION: (2)-HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, The Hospital Dairy.
Legislative Assembly, 21 September 1921, Hansard p. 859.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. Is it correct that the milk produced at the Claremont hospital dairy is mostly sold to outside hospitals, and that the patients at Claremont are given concentrated milk?
2. If this dairy has been run at a loss, what was the loss last year, and what has been the total loss to date? Would it not be more profitable to remove the dairy to Whitby, increase the herd, and place it under capable management?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. Yes; between 50 and 60 gallons of milk produced at the dairy is supplied to Claremont Hospital for the Insane, and about five gallons of concentrated milk is used.
2. The loss last year was £623; total loss since inception of the dairy in 1912, £898.
3. No; Whitby could not carry the herd; the dairy is at present under capable management.

QUESTION: HOTEL METROPOLE, SEWERAGE.
Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1921, Hansard, p. 1039

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Works:

1. Why is the Hotel Metropole permitted to remain unsewered when owners of other premises are compelled to connect their premises with the sewerage system?
2. Will he in the interests of public health, issue instructions that the necessary connections be made?
3. If not, why not?

The Minister for Works replied:

1. The Hotel Metropole was connected with the sewerage scheme of metropolitan area on 20th May 1913.
2. and 3. Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION: KING EDWARD HOSPITAL, EMPLOYEE.
Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1921, Hansard p. 1039.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: Has he seen the paragraph in the "Australian" newspaper of the 23 September stating that a male adult (an Imperial soldier) is employed at the King Edward Hospita doing casual work at 7s per week? Is this statement correct?

The Premier (for the Colonial Secretary) replied:

1. No,
2. Yes. This man agreed to accept one shilling per diem at the King Edward Memorial Hospital as an alternative to re-entering the Old Men's Home, where he had previously been an inmate. He is physically unable to do much work.

QUESTION: ESPLANADE FAIR GROUNDS.

Legislative Assembly, 29 September 1921, Hansard pp. 2240-2241.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Is it correct that the portion of the foreshore known as 'Carnival Square' has been leased to a private citizen named Mr Martin?
2. If it is the Government's policy to lease part of the esplanade, why were no tenders publicly called for?
3. For what length of time has the lease been granted, and at what weekly or other rental?
4. Is it a fact that Mr Martin, as a sole lessee, can use the ground to organise and run any entertainment, should he so desire, for his own personal profit?
5. Is it the Premier's intention to lay all the papers in connection with this matter on the Table of the House?
6. Did he authorise the lease, seeing that his department has the authority to deal with all public reserves and gardens?

The Premier replied:

1. No. The grounds have been rented to the Ugly Men's Association and Silver Chain League for their fixtures, and for the balance of the summer to Mr Martin.
2. A number of offers were received and considered during the year past but owing to impossible demands by the applicants fell through.
3. Till the end of next summer at a rental from time to time, and for three further terms at increased rates if occupied.
4. As tenant he may conduct any entertainment which the law allows.
5. Yes.
6. The arrangement was made by the State Gardens Board for the purpose of obtaining revenue which is used to improve the foreshore. The improvements already made have proved of great convenience to the public.

QUESTION: HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, ROYAL COMMISSION.

Legislative Assembly, 4 October 1921, Hansard p. 1056.

Mr RICHARDSON (for Mrs Cowan) asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. In view of the fact that there are 363 women and children in the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, has it been definitely decided that no woman is to be included in the personnel of the Royal Commission of inquiry?
2. If so why?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. The Commission has been appointed, and the Government see no reason to alter or add to the personnel.
2. Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION: OIL PROSPECTING AREAS.

Legislative Assembly, 19 October 1921, Hansard p. 1328.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Minister for Mines:

1. Has he seen the map published in the last issue of the *Sunday Times* which discloses that the whole of the State has been taken up for oil prospecting purposes?
2. Was it contemplated when the Mining Act Amendment Act was passed last year that such enormous tracts of country should be taken up by single individuals?
3. Is £5 per annum the total revenue that the State is deriving from the granting of each of these enormous leases?
4. Apart from Freney and Oakes and one or two other names of leaseholders that are known to be genuine, will he inform the House:
 - (a) who the other licensees are;
 - (b) what proof he has of their *bona fide* and, whether it is true, as many of them have declared, that they have taken up these areas for speculative purposes only?
5. If all the applicants are bona fide, how will, say, A.J. Mellor, who holds a lease in the most inaccessible part of the State, be able to comply with the conditions to commence and continue the search for oil within 30 days?

The Minister for Mines replied:

1. The map published by the *Sunday Times* shows areas applied for, which embrace the whole of the State, but several of these applications have not yet been dealt with. See further reply to question No. 2.
2. Yes. Large areas are necessary when making investigations regarding the possibility of the occurrence of oil, and such areas are only available under a license to prospect. The policy of the Department, however, is to limit the area where it is reasonably accessible and as an instance it is not intended to grant the application as applied for and shown on the map referred to as O.P.A. 31 and O.P.A. 36, each of which will require to be divided into at least six separate areas. As a further instance of this policy will the hon. Member compare the sizes of the licenses granted in the South-West which is easily accessible, with those in the balance of the State, which is not so accessible. Further, as a precaution against the shepherding of large areas, the conditions of the license under Regulation 25b, paragraph (c), provide for 'cancellation by the Minister, or to amendment of the description of the occupied land by reduction of the area thereof by the Minister upon application by any person for a license to occupy any portion of the land occupied by a licensee if prospecting thereon by the licensee is not being carried out to the satisfaction of the Minister'.

3. Yes. This is only a registration fee and is not intended as a method of obtaining revenue, our anxiety being in the direction of enabling and assisting in the discovery of oil. When such is found in payable quantities a lease must be taken up in lieu of the permit, and the provision as to payment of royalty when oil is discovered will satisfy our anxiety in regard to revenue.
4. I am unable to answer this question in the form it is submitted by the hon. Member for it infers that some of the applicants are not genuine. So far as I am able to ascertain all the applicants are genuine, and, as proof of their *bona fides*, are required to enter a bond of £50 as security for the due performance by the licensee or his transferee of the conditions of the license. With respect to query (a) in the question under reply, the applicants are as shown on the map referred to.
5. I am not in a position to state when or how Mr. A. J. Mellor or any other licensee proposes to commence and to continue the search for oil. Section 7 of the Mining Act Amendment Act of 1920 grants me discretionary power to extend the time beyond the 30 days mentioned in the question.

QUESTION: AVON VALLEY LANDS UNUSED.

Legislative Assembly, 19 October 1921, Hansard p 1328.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Has he seen the suggestions by Mr Surveyor Lefroy regarding the acquisition of a considerable area of land in the Avon Valley, which is not being put to practical use?
2. Is it his intention to lay a upon the Table of the House the report furnished by Mr Lefroy who conducted the classification on that large area, which is within seven miles of a railway, and a summary of whose recommendations is contained in the report of the Surveyor General presented to this house on 27th September?

The Premier replied: 1; Yes. 2, I will lay papers on the House.

QUESTION: HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, ROYAL COMMISSION, Case of F. Cunningham

The Legislative Assembly, 30 November 1921, Hansard, p. 1998.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary: Can he instruct the Royal Commission now sitting to inquire into the case of F. Cunningham, who alleges that he is now fully detained in the asylum?

The Colonial Secretary replied: I have no power to instruct the Royal Commission.

QUESTION: (2)-JUVENILE GAMBLING, Carnival Square, Charitable Appeals.

Legislative Assembly, 7 December 1921, Hansard, pp. 2185-2186.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. Is he aware that gambling is said to be freely indulged in by young people and children per medium of spinning jennies, etc, in the various charitable appeals held from time to time in Carnival Square?
2. Can he not do anything to prevent this state of things form occurring?

The Colonial Secretary replied:

1. No.

2. If I find that children gamble in the way suggested, I will certainly take steps to prevent a continuance of it.

Attitude of Education Department.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Is it a fact that the Education Department permitted metropolitan State Schools to extend their patronage and take part in gambling per medium of spinning jennies, etc. at the various charitable appeals held from time to time in Carnival Square?
2. If so, is it the intention of the Government to see that the laws against gambling are properly enforced, and to instruct the Commissioner of Police to take action against those offending?

The Premier replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION: LOTTERIES AND SWEEPS

Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1922, Hansard p. 151.

Mrs COWAN asked the Colonial Secretary:

1. Has his attention been drawn to an advertisement in the personal columns of the *West Australian* of the 3rd and 4th instant reading: 'Victoria Park Boys' Club Fund, Melbourne Cup sweep. By permission. Tickets 1s., obtainable at principal hotels'.
2. Has permission been obtained from him or his department to conduct this sweep?
3. If not, will he make inquiries as to who gave permission?
4. Has permission been given within the last few months to any industrial or religious body to conduct lotteries or sweeps?
5. If lotteries and sweeps are illegal, by what authority and in what circumstances can permission be given?

The Minister for Agriculture (for the Colonial Secretary) replied:

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Permission was given by the Commissioner of Police.
4. Yes.
5. Cabinet decided in April last that if the law was enforced in the case of raffles, sweeps, and art unions promoted in aid of charitable and other worthy objects, with the approval and support of a large section of the public, it would mean the closing up of many channels of benevolence, and departing from a rule followed by all previous Governments. It was considered, however, that such movements should be regulated and the Commissioner of Police was entrusted with the carrying out of Cabinet's decision.

QUESTION: FORESTS COMMISSION.

Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1922, Hansard p. 151

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Can he give an idea as to how much longer the deliberations of the Forests Commission are likely to last?
2. Was it intended, when this Commission was appointed, that its ramifications should be as wide as the evidence published in the newspapers indicates, namely, the investigations of the leasing to the Kurrawang Firewood Company of a portion of the Government railways and also the value of spark arresters and nullifiers?
3. Will he inform the House what the Commission has cost to date?

The Premier replied:

1. The Commission expects to conclude the taking of evidence within one month, after which the report will have to be prepared. 2. The Commission was empowered to inquire into the administration of the Forests Act, 1918, generally. I am advised by the Chairman that the evidence taken was within the scope of the powers vested in the commission. 3. £18s.8d.

QUESTION: SEWERAGE, WEST PERTH.

Legislative Assembly, 9 August 1922, Hansard p. 151.

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Works:

1. When do the Government intend to extend the sewerage system to that portion of West Perth which has not yet been connected with the system?
2. Will he explain whether there is any reason for this important work not being carried out?

The Minister for Works replied:

1. The proposal is under consideration.
2. The portion of West Perth referred to cannot be connected with the existing system, and must wait until the scheme for taking in Subiaco is decided upon. The cost would be about £200,000, and household connections would cost at least £250,000 extra.

Mr Wilson: A mere bagatelle.

QUESTION: FORESTS COMMISSION, REPORT

Legislative Assembly, 5 October 1922, Hansard p. 1004.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Has the Forests Commission which was appointed in December of last year completed its labours?
2. If so, has he received the report?
3. If not, has he any idea whether it will be presented before the close of the present session?
4. Will he request that it be presented at an early date, so that members may have an opportunity of analysing it before the Forests Department estimates are considered?

The Minister for Works (for the Premier) replied:

1. I am advised that the report is nearing completion.
2. Answered by No. 1.

3. and 4. The Commissioners expect to present their report shortly.

QUESTION: RAILWAYS, OVERHEAD BRIDGE, MELBOURNE ROAD.
Legislative Assembly, 13 September 1922, Hansard p. 718.

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Railways:

1. Is he aware of the great inconvenience, and possible danger to life, caused to the public by the absence of an overhead bridge at Melbourne-road railway crossing?
2. Is there any possibility of such a requirement being provided for the use of citizens?
3. If so when is it likely to be proceeded with?

The Minister for Railways replied:

1. Some inconvenience necessarily occurs at all railway crossings which are provided with gates.
2. Yes.
3. When funds are available?

QUESTION: WHEAT FOR HOME GRISTING.
Legislative Assembly, 7 December 1922, Hansard p. 666.

Mrs COWAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1. Does he know that prime wheat for home gristing is almost unobtainable by householders at present?
2. Is he aware that, to make use of the only quality on sale, it is necessary to spend it out first and pick the foreign matter from it by hand?
3. Can he suggest how the really prime article can be obtained, or inform consumers whether the Wheat Board will inquire into the scarcity at present existing?

The Minister for Agriculture replied:

1. No. Marketable wheat, i.e. wheat of fair average quality standard of the State always contains a small percentage of foreign matter.
2. Specially cleaned wheat is obtainable from flour mills where the demand warrants the expense.
3. There is sufficient wheat on hand, including supplies already at mills, to meet local requirements till the new season's wheat is harvested.

QUESTION: ELECTORAL, COMPULSORY VOTING
Legislative Assembly, 9 January 1923, Hansard p. 2453.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Whether the Electoral Department is in a possession of information relating to compulsory voting in other parts of the world?

2. If so-particularly in view of the apathy displayed at the recent Federal Elections-will the Government cause to be prepared a brief return showing the results that have been attained in those countries where that system of voting is in force?
3. If it is possible to secure this return, will the Government have it made available before consideration of the Electoral Districts Bill is resumed?

The Premier replied:

1. Yes, except in regard to new States created by the war.
2. Yes and the information, in round figures, in regard to the percentage of votes cast is as follows:-Queensland , increased from 60 to 90 per cent.; Belgium increased from 60 to 94 per cent.; Austria, increased in from 55 to 80 per cent.; Spain increased from 50 to 76 per cent.: five Cantons in Switzerland, increased from 60 to 80 per cent. It should be explained that the low percentage in regard to Spain is due to the illiteracy of the population in certain provinces.
3. See reply to No.2.

QUESTION: GROUP SETTLEMENTS, Medical Care and Maternity Cases
Legislative Assembly, 20 September 1923, Hansard pp. 780-781.

Mrs COWAN asked the Premier:

1. Have the Government done anything to provided any kind of medical care for the group settlements?
2. Is it not possible to place this most necessary matter in the hands of the Medical Department to deal with?
3. If not, why not?
4. Have arrangements been made at any of the group settlements to enable maternity cases to receive proper care and attention?
5. If not, why not?
6. Is the Premier aware that the Busselton hospital midwifery ward is closed and there is no private midwifery hospital in the town to take midwifery cases.
7. When was the Busselton midwifery ward closed, and for what reason?
8. What arrangements are now being made to handle midwifery cases?
9. Is the Premier aware that correspondence addressed to Busselton hospital on the 7th August asking what medical attention is given there had not been replied to on the 7th September, and probably has not been replied to yet?
10. Would it not be possible to provide one shack at each group where maternity cases could at least be given privacy?
11. Is the Premier aware that otherwise women must remain in huts which are like one room, and which husband and children must share for sleeping and eating: that these huts are in many instances without windows, and that nothing has been done to make them fly-proof?

12. Has any attempt been made by the Government to secure the services of any trained midwife who may happen to reside on a group settlement, or provide in any way for the needs of expectant mothers.

The Premier replied:

1. Yes.
2. It is in the hands of the Medical Department.
3. Answered by No. 2.
4. No; but provision has been made at Busselton, and consideration is being given to the establishment of a hospital at Margaret River.
5. Answered by No.4.
6. No maternity ward has ever been established in connection with the Busselton hospital. A private maternity hospital was recently closed, but a new building with accommodation for four cases has been registered. 7, Answered by No.6.
8. In addition to the private maternity hospital, the Government have approved of plans for a maternity ward as determined by the local hospital committee.
9. No.
10. No. A small hospital will be erected at Margaret River.
11. No. The temporary homes that I have seen are comfortable, clean and well kept. Group settlers are self-respecting people.
12. No. Group settlers are in the same position as ordinary settlers so far as medical attention is concerned. There are Government or assisted hospitals in many centres, including Jarnadup, Busselton-the head-quarters of group settlement in those districts. Peel estate groups are near to Fremantle. A subsidised doctor is in practice at Margaret River, who will be available for group settlers and old residents.

MOTIONS AND REMARKS

Railway Construction Costs, 14 September 1921

Speaker's Gallery, Privileges to Women, 28 September 1921

**Soldier Settlement, Pryton and Hearne Hill Estates, 28 September 1921
(Debate Participation)**

University Fees and Bursaries, 12 December 1921 (Debate Participation)

Retirement of H.C. Kessell, 15 December 1921 (Debate Participation)

Pension rights of J.B. Connolly, 30 October 1923 (Debate Participation)

Complimentary Remarks: Christmas Adjournment, 2 December 1921

MOTION

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Legislative Assembly, 14 September 1921

Hansard p. 747

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.46]:

I move:-

That there be laid upon the Table of the House a return showing the cost of construction of each railway throughout the State and the profit or loss, as the case may be, of each branch during the past three years.

At the present time no one seems to know which lines are paying and which are not. I think we have a right to some information on this point. The other night the Minister for Railways pointed out that there were certain railways which it would be well to remove from their present situation and replace by a system of motor transport. I was glad to hear him make that statement, because that is the principal object I have in view in moving this motion. There are a number of railways which people say do not pay, and it would set at rest the minds of the community if a return of this description were made public. Certainly, the publication of such information could do no harm. It might be better to remove some of the existing lines and use them for development work in other parts of the country. I am asking for a return for a period of three years only, in order that it might not be opposed on the ground of expense, as it might be if I asked for figures extending over a longer period. I trust the Minister will take this point into consideration. The motor service would be infinitely better for the school children, especially for those who have to be transported to the more or less consolidated schools which it is proposed to have to a great extent in future. If we can save in one direction as well as in the other direction, surely it is a matter worthy of consideration.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

The *MINISTER FOR MINES* (Hon.J. Scaddan-Albany)-on amendment: I have tried to make the House understand that it is not possible, or at all events not practicable, to supply the information in the form set forth by the motion. We cannot tabulate profit and loss on the various sections of our railway system. However, I have no objection to the amendment, which asks for the capital cost—that information being available. As regards the remainder of the motion, I desire the insertion of the words "if practicable" because I do not wish to be instructed by the Chamber to furnish information which cannot be obtained. I really suggested the amendment out of the goodness of my heart, out of a desire that the member for West Perth should carry the first motion that she moves in this Chamber. Very frequently a Minister, when opposing a motion of this character, is accused of opposing it not because the information cannot be supplied, but because he wants to prevent hon. members from securing information. The insertion of the words "if practicable" would prevent the possibility of my being charged, towards the end of the session, with refusing to supply information ordered by the Chamber. The insertion of those words would prevent my being placed in a false position; I have no desire to be accused of refusing to furnish information that has been ordered.

Mrs Cowan: That is as good answer; but the information should be available.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and negatived

MOTION SPEAKER'S GALLERY PRIVILEGES TO WOMEN

**Legislative Assembly, 28 September 1921
Hansard pp. 1000-1007.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.35] I move-

That in the opinion of this House the privilege of admission to the Speaker's gallery should be extended to women as well as men.

The Constitution of the House has altered since the last elections and women are now admitted into this Chamber, as members, if they can get here. It is somewhat anomalous to find that there are two galleries for men and only one for women. A member is able to extend the privileges to male members of the community, but is unable to extend any privileges whatever to women. It seems to me that it is hardly what was intended; nor is it quite a fair thing to women that we should not be able to show them that distinct attention-which is supposed to be-of giving them the privilege of sitting in the Speaker's gallery on occasions. I do not think the Speaker's gallery will be overcrowded because, of the two, the public gallery is probably more comfortable. It is the mere fact that women are not admitted that makes them wish to have the stigma removed. It seems rather absurd position in some ways to most of us. To-day in discussing the position with a gentleman, it was explained to me that the Almighty never intended women to be put in the position that I was in to-day. I was obliged to remind that not only did the Bible tell us that it was not a good thing for man to be alone, but that "male and female created He them [sic] and gave them dominion over all things". I do not think He intended that special privileges should be granted to one section of the community which could not reasonably be granted to the other. I understand that in New South Wales women are admitted there. In the Commonwealth Parliament women are admitted to the galleries. I do not think other members of the house will rush the privilege at once and fill the gallery with women.

The Premier: You never know!

Mrs COWAN: If they do it will not be the fault of women. I understand that quite lately, since this change in our constitution occurred, one or two women have been privileged to be admitted either to the gallery of the Upper House or upon the floor of the Upper House. I do not wish to stress the matter much further, but I do think it is not quite fair to women that they should not be given equal privileges with the men in this House. They are not admitted to the bar of the House to plead on important occasions, if there happens to be anything very much affecting their interests. I think it was intended that all that should be done away with when equal citizenship rights were given to my sex, and enabled one of us to get here. I hope the motion will be carried and that the House will support me in what I am asking.

Mr J. Thomson (Claremont) [4.39]: I second the motion. I cannot understand, Sir, why you gave the ruling you did the other day. Although I should be glad to see the ladies beyond the bar of the House. Upon the Address-in-Reply there was something in particular I wanted to say and I should like to say it now, but perhaps it might be just as well for me to refrain from doing so. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

Mr O'LOUGHLIN (Forrest) [4.41]: I anticipate that this motion will probably be carried, but I hope that it will not be carried in the form in which it has been moved.

Mr Underwood: What other form would you suggest?

Mr O'LOUGHLIN: I will indicate it if the hon. Member will exercise a little patience. I move an amendment-
That after the word "gallery" the words "and other galleries" be inserted.

If hon members desire to extend to ladies the right and privilege of sitting in the Speaker's gallery, then I think that the men should have the right to sit in the gallery now occupied by only ladies. There is no reason why we should have a law for the segregation of either men or women into particular groups. In the Federal Parliament both sexes sit together in the Speaker's gallery and in the public galleries.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mrs COWAN (West Perth-on amendment) [5.34]: It seems to me that the point is being lost sight of. I asked that sittings should be made equal. At present there is a public gallery open to women. Then there is the Speaker's gallery, in respect of which the privilege is extended to men coming in and sitting there, by the Speaker's permission. In moving the motion I had no desire to be in any way whatsoever discourteous to our Speaker: and indeed, His honour the Speaker has expressed himself a preference for having the matter referred to the House for decision: at least, so I understood. So long as men and women are equal in the matter of admittance here, that is all that is required. I have never heard of a woman asking that all galleries of this Chamber should be thrown open to women. All I am asking is that in respect of the Speaker's gallery-there being no Speaker's gallery for women-women as well as men should have the privilege of sitting there at any time. I should like to reply to the remarks of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker).

Mr Speaker: The hon. member must speak to the amendment at present.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Amendment put and passed.

Question as amended put, and a division taken with the following result:-

Ayes	23
Noes	16
Majority of -	7
AYES	
Mr Angelo	Mr McCallum
Mr Carter	Mr Munsie
Mr Collier	Mr Richardson
Mr Corboy	Mr Scadden
Mr Cowan	Mr Simons
Mr Davies	Mr A Thomson
Mr Heron	Mr Troy
Mr Johnston	Mr Underwood
Mr Lambert	Mr Walker
Mr H K Maley	Mr Willcock
Mr Mann]	Mr O'Loughlen (Teller).
Mr Marshall	

NOES

Mr Angwin
Mr Boyland
Mr Chesson
Mr Denton
Mr Durack
Mr Gibson
Mr Hickmott

Mr Latham
Sir James Mitchell
Mr Piesse
Mr Sampson
Mr Stubbs
Mr J Thomson
Mr Mullany (*Teller*)

Question thus passed.

MOTION SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, PYRTON AND HERNE HILL STATES

**Legislative Assembly, 12 October 1921
Hansard pp. 1172-1173.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.46]:

I move:-

That all papers in connection with the settlement of soldiers on the Pyrtton and Herne Hill estates, described in an article published in the "West Australian" of the 24th September, be laid on the Table of the House.

It would be interesting to know how that settlement is progressing, what it has cost, and any other details which may be obtainable from the papers. I do not know whether any other member read the article referred to, but it served to make me realise that apparently very fine work is going on out there. Many of us do not know the details of the scheme, or anything at all about it, and it would be a good thing if we had some knowledge of the subject.

Question put and passed.

MOTION: UNIVERSITY FEES; AND BURSARIES

Legislative Assembly, 12 December 1921

Hansard pp. 2597-2616.

Hon. P. Collier (Boulder) [7.35]: I move-

That Statute No. 19 of the University of Western Australia establishing fees and bursaries for attendance of students at the lectures and classes of the University, and laid upon the Table of the House on Thursday, 24th November, in accordance with the provisions of Section 33 of The University of Western Australia Act, 1911, ought to be annulled.

In view of the motion which I am submitting for the approval of the House, it is interesting to recall the brief history of our little University.

Mr Underwood: It is very small.

Hon. P. Collier: It is an infant today, but as years go on, and generations succeed generations, we hope and feel sure that it will grow to fruitful and lusty manhood.

Mr Underwood: It will be different from other universities if it does.

Hon. P. Collier: I know that the hon. member is hostile to the University as an institution at all. The hon. member holds certain views regarding the facilities that should, or might be provided for the higher training of our youth. If I interpret his views aright, he believes that the university of the world or of the bush is the best. The Member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) is entitled to his views on that question, but I venture to say that he stands in splendid isolation.

*****[OTHER SPEAKERS]**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.19]: I will support the motion. Just before the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) rose to speak so strongly on the subject of education, I told him I believed in having education for everybody, whereupon he remarked that I had not had a university education. In reply I said, "No, more is the pity." I think perhaps we all feel it is a pity we were not able to attend a university, that had it been free in our day it would have made a great difference to our culture generally and perhaps the whole community. Because I always believe that what is good comes down from above to below. We do not require to take up the attitude of that hon. member, who reminds me of Oliver Wendell Holmes who in "The Professor at the Breakfast Table" says what a splendid thing it is to be a self-made man. We are all self-made in that sense of the word. He explains how interesting it is to see the Irishman's house on the marsh. He built it absolutely with his own hands. It is a little wavy here, a little out of plumb there, and a little wrong somewhere else; it certainly has not an artistic effect, but he admires it, because, as he says "Better to be made that way than not at all." When listening to the member for Pilbara I realised what a fine leader he might have been, and what things he might have done if he had had that very education we are all needing so badly. He himself is a splendid illustration of the need for that very thing which he says we should not have. I do not think we have given the system of free education a fair trial, because we have not provided the money necessary to its proper development. I do not like this pauperising idea in regard to bursaries. There is a terrible humiliation in being asked intimate and personal questions as to one's means. It hurts. When one realises, as I have done, what it means to the women who have to submit to having their personal affairs pried into when they require help from the Charities Department, it is easy to realise what it will mean when people who desire a university education for their children are subjected to the same ordeal. I am in favour of the amendment proposed by the member for Sussex (Mr Pickering)

and I should like to see something of the sort done as soon as possible. There is another reason why we should not refuse what is needed in this way: On a practically unanimous vote it was decided to provide an additional £8,000 per annum for increases in members' salaries. If we can do that, we ought to be able to find the small amount extra required by the University. During the next few sittings of the House, when we have the Licensing Bill before us, the Leader of the Opposition will have a fine opportunity to help get in additional revenue. The revenue to be derived under that Bill should help greatly to provide these funds-

Mr Speaker. I cannot allow the hon. member to discuss the Licensing Bill.

Hon. P. Collier. I will consider the suggestion.

Mrs COWAN. I will support the motion.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Question put and passed.

MOTION

RETIREMENT OF H.C. KESSELL.

Legislative Assembly, 15 December 1921
Hansard p. 2467.

To inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 16th November on the following motion by Captain Carter-

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the retirement from the Government services of A.C. Kessell.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.4]: I support the motion. It would be a good thing if this case could be settled satisfactorily. I endorse the remarks of the member for Coolgardie. It is sometimes extremely hard for a civil servant to get justice done, and the public generally would be better satisfied if a select committee were appointed so that Kessell would get what he himself calls a fair deal.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Question put, and division taken with the following result:-

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	<u>20</u>
Majority against				<u>4</u>

Ayes

Mr Carter
Mrs Cowan
Mr Davies
Mr Denton
Mr Gibson
Mr Heron
Mr Johnston
Mr Lambert

Mr Latham
Mr McCallum
Mr Richardson
Mr Sampson
Mr Scaddan
Mr J M Smith
Mr Wilson
Mr Willcock
(Teller)

Noes

Mr Angelo
Mr Angwin
Mr Chesson
Mr Clydesdale
Mr Collier
Mr Durack
Mr George
Mr Harrison
Mr Hickmott
Mr C C Maley

Mr H K Maley
Sir James Mitchell
Mr Mullany
Mr Pickering
Mr Piesse
Mr J H Smith
Mr J Thomas
Mr Underwood
Mr Corboy
(Teller)

Question thus negatived.

MOTION

PENSION RIGHTS OF J.B. CONNOLLY

Legislative Assembly, 3 October 1923

Hansard pp. 982-983.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from 12th September on the motion by Mr Hughes -

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the pension rights under the provisions of the Superannuation Act, 1871, of John Bede Connolly, formerly clerk in the Railway Department.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.56]: I intend to support the motion. I have listened with great attention to the remarks of the Minister for Railways. I had hoped he would have offered some more satisfactory explanation of all that has gone before. In this case a young man entered the service in 1897, and the pension rights were only abolished in 1904. If, therefore, anyone is entitled to a pension this particular man is. There appears to be an attempt to throw doubt on these pension rights always when it comes to the point of having to grant them. At all events we know that this man joined the service as a boy as far back as 1897; and continued in it until 1915. According to the Minister's explanation I should imagine that he might easily have been charged in 1915 with inefficiency, and with something that appears to be in the nature of wrong doing. Apparently his action was not such as to cause the department to feel that it had any legal right to take steps to get rid of him. He was, therefore, allowed to go on for another seven years. In the circumstances, therefore, it seems hardly fair that he should have been dismissed without any pension rights, seeing that when he joined the service he was entitled to expect that he would receive a pension upon retiring. It is all very well to talk about appealing to an outside court. All civil servants know what it is to attempt to have their cases so tried, how impossible the position is for them, and what a tangle has been made for them of the whole business. They have to get permission after permission in various directions, and they may die before their cases are heard. Therefore they generally decide upon some compromise, or to fight for their rights in any way possible. For these reasons I am prepared to support the motion for the appointment of a select committee. Our civil servants do not always get as fair a deal as they might in many ways, because the Act governing them is so complicated. It prevents them from getting the full measure of justice to which they are entitled. If Connolly was unfit for his position, he should have been dismissed long before. Apparently, however, this was not done and his unfitness was overlooked. I do not know the man or anything about him except what has been stated here, but I am prepared to support the motion for the reasons I have given.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Question put and a division taken with the following result:-

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	15
				—
Majority for	..			<u>4</u>

Ayes

**Mr Angelo
Mr Angwin
Mr Chesson
Mr Collier
Mr Corboy
Mrs Cowan
Mr Cunningham
Mr Heron
Mr Hughes
Mr Lambert**

**Mr Lutey
Mr Mann
Mr Marshall
Mr McCallum
Mr Stubbs
Mr Teesdale
Mr Walker
Mr Wilson
Mr Munsie
(Teller)**

Noes

**Mr Broun
Mr Carter
Mr George
Mr Hickmott
Mr Latham
Mr H K Maley
Sir James Mitchell
Mr Lambert**

**Mr Pickering
Mr Piesse
Mr Sampson
Mr Scaddan
Mr A Thomson
Mr Underwood
Mr Mullany
(Teller)**

COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS CHRISTMAS ADJOURNMENT.

Legislative Assembly, 22 December 1921

***Hansard* p. 2618.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.38]: May I be allowed to thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and other members for the consideration they have extended to me during the time I have been in the House. It has been a little trying sometimes I must admit, but one expects to get a little opposition when coming into a body such as this, and one accepts it, I hope, in the right spirit. I thank those who have been so kind and considerate to me and reciprocate the good wishes. I thank you, Mr Speaker and all other members of the House for the spirit in which they have received the only woman member. It must be sometimes extremely trying for them to have a woman amongst them, but I have done my best to make it as little trying as possible and I think they too have done their best in the same way. I wish all a happy Christmas and a prosperous new year.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTES (BUDGET) (Chronological)

Council of Industrial Development and Tourists Publicists' Bureau, 30 October 1921.

Worker' Homes Board, 25 October 1921.

Education, 26 October 1921.

Medical and Public Health, 26 October 1921.

Public Works and Buildings, 15 November 1921.

Harbour and Lights and Jetties, 24 November 1921.

Lunacy and Inebriates, 24 November 1921.

State Children and Outdoor Relief, 24 November 1921.

Public Utilities, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewage and Drainage, 30 November 1921.

Railways, 1 December 1921.

Public Utilities, Metropolitan Water Supply , Sewage and Drainage, 13 December 1922.

Lands and Surveys, 18 September 1923.

Government Savings Bank, 25 September 1923.

Infant Health Association, Child Clinic, 27 September 1923.

Public Works and Buildings, 27 September 1923.

Police, 16 October 1923.

Office of Colonial Secretary, 30 October 1923.

Railways, 8 November 1923.

State Hotels, 20 November 1923.

Railways and Tramways, 27 November 1923.

**ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, COUNCIL OF
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISTS'
AND PUBLICISTS' BUREAU, £2,720.**

**Legislative Assembly, 20 October 1921,
Hansard p. 1395.**

Mrs COWAN: I support the vote. I have seen a good deal in connection with the industrial development work. It would be a great pity not to pass the item, because very fine work has been done by the council. It is going to mean a great deal to the State in the long run.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, WORKERS HOMES BOARD, £4,335

**Legislative Assembly, 25 October 1921,
Hansard p. 1452.**

Mrs COWAN: Not long ago investigations showed that there were four-roomed houses in which 25 people were living. It is time we returned to the old system of establishing worker's homes so that people can get homes. I am as anxious as anyone to see people settling in the country, but there are large numbers who cannot be accommodated. Metropolitan members intend to stand up for their constituents in this matter.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, EDUCATION, £529,946.

**Legislative Assembly, 26 October 1921,
Hansard p. 1492.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.5]: I want to express my disagreement from the last Speaker. It seems to me that the ideal set up by that hon. Member is that the mother should be not only wife, but cleaner and cook and washer woman, and that, in addition, she should educate the family in various important matters, matters in which she herself had never had the advantage of being trained. Things were very different in the olden times when the mother had the leisure to teach her children these necessary things, things which I, for example, was taught by my relations, who had leisure to do it because they had assistance with regard to those other matters. Nothing is more important to the community than the proper training of girls and women in domestic science and household management. I cannot agree with the remarks of the member for Pilbara in that respect.

Mr Underwood: Is not cleaning pots a domestic science?

Mrs COWAN: As regards domestic science in household matters, the schools do teach the children to clean the pots, and they teach it in a very thorough and competent manner. I have myself been there and seen it done, and it is done with the utmost regularity. Am I to be told that a girl is going to make any the worse wife or mother because she learns such things as cookery, including special cookery for invalids? I am sure every hon. Member is more than pleased to have the results of such training when they are given to him by a woman who has been educated to know the true value of food. It is still true that the royal road to a man's heart lies through—well, not his heart. The mothers of hon. Members had, in their turn, mothers who were able to give proper instruction in cooking; the mothers of members who knew those things. But during the last 50 or 60 years many of those things have been taken out of the home—pickling, jam making, etc. men have made money by establishing preserving works, for instance. Sixty or 70 years ago there were done in the stillroom such things as brewing, and the concoction of medicines. Of later years women have not had any training in those things. Not every woman nowadays is competent, owing to the lack of educating the daughters. When I was very young, one could not get pastry outside the home.

Mr Munsie: I can get better pastry cooked in my home than I can in any shop in Perth.

Mrs COWAN: I agree, but the majority of women nowadays do not know how to make pastry, and therefore do not know how to teach their daughters to make it. We know very well that this is so, because otherwise men would not be making out of pastry and confectionary shops the money that they are making at the present time. The member for Pilbara said it would be a shocking thing to take away the teaching of millinery and dress cutting. Why should we be so anxious to pander to a side of men which is certainly not the highest?

Mr Munsie: It is good for the mother to be able to make a few clothes, anyhow.

Mrs COWAN: We get a lot of admiring talk concerning the woman who is good at domestic science and capable in the home; but I notice that when it comes to the test, even the member for Pilbara prefers that a woman should turn out in a very pretty dress and a nicely trimmed hat, and he makes no inquiry as to her capability otherwise. I am sure that the average man when he marries, speedily realises that it would have been better for him had such a girl possessed a little more knowledge of domestic science. Domestic science is a most necessary thing in the country districts and elsewhere. I wonder at the attitude of men in thinking that they are so competent to deal with these matters. They only know the results, and one of the results is that very frequently a man is experimented on very considerably and very liberally during the first years of his married life, until

poor old mother has got her hand in. And by that time she is supposed to be teaching her daughters what she has so perfunctorily learned herself, and has no time, amid her varied duties to do instruction properly, even if experience has made her competent.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Two-thirds of the girls can cook before they are married, having been taught in their homes. That stuff about experimenting on husbands is only fit for pictures.

Mrs COWAN: I think I would have just about as much right to instruct the members of this House about the correct way of running an office or a mine or a factory, as they have to suggest what kind of training it is necessary to give a woman for the life she is to lead. I absolutely deny the hon. Member's statement in respect to soiled clothes. Soiled clothes are taken to school to wash, but not in the way the hon. Members suggests. The children are invited to take along clean things to be starched and ironed, but that does not prevent their taking of soiled clothes and being taught how to wash them. I know these things, for I have had a daughter in charge of household management centres and I have been there myself often enough to know what goes on. The children are taught these things and shown how to use, not only the proper utensil but some other utensil, and to make shift with it; because one of the last things that "father" is willing to do provide the best possible outfit for the kitchen, no matter whether "mother" has been properly trained or left untrained. I am going to ask that we have these classes not only continued but, if possible, increased in our country centres as well. I deprecate any other attitude being taken on this question, because it is of very great importance, and we should provide the best possible training if we desire to get the best type of wife and mother.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH, £177,210

**Legislative Assembly, 26 October 1921,
Hansard p. 1511.**

Mrs COWAN: When the department is dismissing nurses, I hope due regard will be had to the service of those who were engaged with the military forces. I understand there were two nurses whose services were dispersed with a little while ago and that one of these was a military nurse. These nurses rank as soldiers and should have preference of employment.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS, £106,755.

**Legislative Assembly, 15 November 1921,
Hansard pp. 1673-1674.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth): I am sorry to see no provision on the Estimates for the Children's Court. I do not know whether the Minister has ever been in there on a hot day or on a wet day. The last time we had a wet day there it was necessary to wear goloshes if one wished to walk in comfort about the floor. The top window, which provides the only ventilation in the room, is in the roof and happened to be open when the storm broke, and in consequence the rain came in all over the place. Very few hon. Members have ever troubled to visit the building. There is no window in the court room.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Is that the building at the back of the Children's Department?

Mrs COWAN: Yes

Hon. W.C. Angwin: That is not a bad building at all.

Mrs COWAN: The hon. Member does not come there often, nor does he evince much interest in the place. Also I should like to know if it is possible to do something in the way of setting aside a definite amount for maintenance, to be spent by various boards and committees in charge of public buildings. We on the hospital board could often save money to the State if we were allowed a certain sum for necessary minor repairs, which cost much more when left and lumped together. The board is caused a great deal of inconvenience through not having even a small fixed sum for the purpose. Again, when there are buildings such as public hospitals, schools and homes for children to be erected, the advice of competent women in regard to the plans should be sought and accepted. Given their advice, we should not have quarters for babies so arranged that they get the hole of the easterly wind in winter and no sea breeze in summer. The same may be said of the quarters for the heads of staffs. Again, kitchens and dining rooms are placed when they get the whole of the morning sun and a good deal of the afternoon sun, while the vegetable room and stores get all the sea breeze.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Is that at the hospital?

Mrs COWAN: I am speaking of the plans made by the Architects' Department. Probably the Minister does not know that the planning of public buildings is sometimes done on these lines.

The Minister for Works: I reprimanded those who did that.

Mrs COWAN: I am glad of that. It was well deserved. It upsets one to go through a building like that and realise how badly it was planned. Then there are the nurses' quarters, which have no shelter over the windows.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: They have iron buildings in Kalgoorlie.

Mrs COWAN: The hon. Member always seems to take the greatest possible objection to my remarks. He has his own views, and I think he might sometimes allow me the opportunity for airing mine; they are generally in the interests of a portion of the community who cannot look after themselves.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: It is generally the opposite way where you are concerned.

Mrs COWAN: I do not propose to debate that question.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Women who want assistance never get it from you.

Mrs COWAN: Again, there are the detention quarters for boys and girls at the State children receiving home. That place has never yet been provided with adequate comfort or with proper arrangements for the special types of incorrigible children, and I am hoping that something will be done in that respect in the near future. The Minister will not mind this criticism, because when things are brought under his notice he is always most considerate, and I am sure he will realise that what I say is in the best interests of the children, and therefore of the State.

Hon. W.C. Angwin (North-East Fremantle) [9.8] Several of those who have spoken to-night do not understand the Works Estimates at all. The Works Department merely carries out works asked for by other departments. The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan) has been dealing with the Charities Department. The Works Department does not work for the department except what is requested through the Colonial Secretary.

Mrs COWAN: I think Mr Chairman, you would have called me to order-

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Let the hon. Member take her seat! I am in order all right. It is not amusing to hear an hon. Member say 'please Mr. Minister for Works will you provide more ventilation and put the court in which I sit for an hour a week in better order than it is'. What about the children who go there? The hon. Member cares very little about them. She talks a lot, but does nothing.

Mrs COWAN: I do more than do you.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, HARBOUR AND LIGHTS AND JETTIES, £21 980.

**Legislative Assembly, 24 November 1921,
Hansard pp.1915-1916.**

Mrs COWAN: I wish to secure a remedy for the present condition of things on the river. To me it seems extraordinary that there should be such entire freedom from restrictions in respect of private boats. No one is there to prevent young people from going out in any weather or from overcrowding their boats. A board should be appointed to look after the river. I know that the Fremantle Boat Licensing Board, under Capt. Winzar, does this work to some extent now. But private boats should be registered, paying a small fee towards the upkeep of the river, jetties, and so forth. Then the position would be much safer. There should also be a proper and regular police patrol of the river. I know that on Saturdays the police launch goes out from about 2.30 to 6 p.m., and on Sundays from about 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; but those patrols are hardly sufficient to permit of the police looking after private boats, which seem to do as they like. It is a very serious matter that year after year we have terrible river tragedies, but without any control being established. I understand there is no control even of hired boats beyond the Causeway and Canning Bridge.

Mr Corboy: For some years I have spent every week end during the summer in sailing boats on the river. My party were very fortunate, never being capsized; but I always thought, and still think, that some board should be established by Parliament to control private boats, and especially to ensure that anyone in charge of a boat shall carry sufficient lifeboats for everybody on board. As regards upkeep of jetties, the jetties are not used by the yachting fraternity.

Mrs COWAN: Yes, they are, by means of dinghies.

Mr Corboy: Only about 4 or 5 per cent of sailing boats on the river have dinghies. The police do not allow yachts to use the jetties.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, LUNACY AND INEBRIATES, £94,918

**Legislative Assembly, 24 November 1921,
Hansard pp. 1920-1921.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.34]: I support the Leader of the Opposition in his references to the Mable case. It has always seemed extraordinary to me that while we have Master in Lunacy, the estate of this unfortunate individual was not looked after more adequately. Whether a mistake was made or not at the outset, the estate was under the charge of the Master in Lunacy during the period of Mable's detention. It would have been in the interests of the State to see that the farm was kept properly during that time and that the profits made out of the property were set aside for the support of the children as well as of Mable and Mrs Mable. I consider Mrs Mable was kept in the asylum for longer than she should have been detained and I have felt very sympathetic towards her in her troubles. I deprecate strongly the fact that no woman has been appointed to a position on the Royal Commission to investigate lunacy matters here. I asked the Minister a question on this point some time ago.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: I will look after the women.

The Chairman: I am afraid I cannot allow the hon. Member to discuss the Royal Commission on Lunacy at this stage.

Mrs COWAN: If we could get those intimate questions which can only be put by a woman to women, it would probably help to secure savings in various directions. The fact that there are 333 women and so many children at an institution such as the Claremont Hospital for the Insane, should emphasise the necessity for a woman on such a Commission.

The Chairman: The hon. member cannot proceed to discuss that matter.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, STATE CHILDREN AND OUTDOOR RELIEF, £90,428.

**Legislative Assembly, 24 November 1921,
Hansard, pp. 1921-1922.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.42] Reference is made to State children and outdoor relief. I asked the Minister recently to take into consideration the difficulty mothers experience at the present time in getting along on the allowance provided. I have come into contact with a number of these women and I know their difficulties are great. I have approached the department on more than one occasion and have been unable in some cases to get extra money allowed. The cost of living has not sufficiently declined to enable these women to care for their children and have anything over for themselves. Extra assistance has been declined in cases where women happen to have a little money on hand. In the event of a mother having £40 or £50 of her own, it has to be remembered that is all she has to fall back on for her own requirements; she has nothing whatever for her children except what she can earn. A greater allowance should be provided to assist these women. In New Zealand the Government provide up to 15s. for each child over one year of age and where special circumstances arise, that amount can be increased. They also provide 17s.6d. for children under one year of age and medical attention, medicine, and school facilities. It is hardly right that when the necessity for reduced expenditure arises, such allowances should be the first to be cut down. I do not know how the difficulty is to overcome. No one believes in education more than I do, but before we come to the question of education we must consider whether a child is in a fit state of health to receive education. No child can profit from education when it is in a semi-starved state during the earlier years of its life. I ask the Government to give as much consideration as possible to these people. I had a very hard case brought under my notice recently where a woman who was in bad health herself had to support two children and a husband who was suffering from tuberculosis.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Did the husband not have an invalid pension?

Mrs COWAN: The extraordinary thing about it is that, although the invalid pension is 15s., the man only received 10s. That matter is being inquired into now.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: If the wife is working, half of her earnings go to him. That is the way it is worked.

Mrs COWAN: We know what it means to keep a person suffering from tuberculosis in food alone, and despite that fact, because the woman was earning 30s a week, the allowance for one child was withdrawn. Fortunately I have been able to get that allowance re-established temporarily, but it should be made permanent. Each case should be dealt with on its merits.

The Colonial Secretary: So it is.

Mrs COWAN: In the case of the woman I have referred to, the doctor informed her that she might have to go to hospital at any time owing to the wretched state of her health. I can give many other cases and I think this question should receive most sympathetic consideration.

ESTIMATE ANNUAL VOTE, PUBLIC UTILITIES, METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWAGE AND DRAINAGE, £120,481.

**Legislative Assembly, 30 November 1921,
Hansard pp. 2015-2016.**

I was glad to hear the Minister say that we would have a better water supply during the present summer. It is necessary that we should have a better supply, although I cannot agree with the member for East Perth (Mr. Simons) that the suburb which I represent is in the dirty condition he says East Perth is in at the present time. I would suggest to the Minister that the metropolitan members who have been meeting and discussing this matter together, with a view to helping to find a solution of the present difficulty, have only been actuated by a desire to assist him in that direction. If the Minister were to express his willingness to meet those members in conference, it might be good for all concerned. It could do no harm. In any case, we are not against the department, nor are we working against the Minister.

The Minister for Works: I do not care if you are against the department. If you can do any good or show us where we are wrong, I shall be pleased.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister spoke in resentful tones about the metropolitan members this evening.

Mrs COWAN: There is a good deal of comment on the point at election time and it is well known that some people are not satisfied that the scheme favoured by Mr. Ritchie is the best that could be adopted. That is a matter, however, for the department to consider, and I have no doubt they will thoroughly investigate that question. In reading through Mr Ritchie's report, I was struck by the fact that he did not seem to be quite satisfied regarding the way details of the scheme had been presented to him, inasmuch as he found it necessary to look around himself and supplement the information provided. Perhaps that again is a matter more for the department than for ourselves. It makes one feel, however, that a conference with the Minister on the subject would be of advantage and would make everyone satisfied. I would like to see a board take over the responsibility inquiries in every direction in connection with these matters, and then to carry out if possible, what is decided upon. It would be a good thing if we were to have an inquiry concerning the metropolitan water supply scheme generally. Some people favour the Mundaring Weir proposal, and others favour the Canning scheme. It appears to me that the Canning scheme is the one that presents greater advantages for the people of the metropolitan area, not only on account of the good water which can be obtained from that source, but on account of the way in which the reticulation can be managed.

Capt. CARTER: Let the Board decide that question.

Mrs COWAN: If such a scheme were decided upon, it would leave the Mundaring scheme for the benefit of the country districts. If we could have a separate administration looking after the water supply for the metropolitan area, and allow the country districts to have an organisation to look after their particular interests, I think more satisfaction would be given to both sections of the community. If there is to be any repetition in the city of the conditions that existed last year, when they were particularly bad, there will be trouble for metropolitan members and other members as well, because the people will raise their voices in no uncertain tones.

The Minister for Works: No, you have not.

Mrs COWAN: I do not know why a board should necessarily be inferior to the present system in regard to the management of the water supply for the metropolitan area. There will always be

grumblers, no matter if the Government continue in control of the water supply services or if a board is in control.

Hon. P. Collier: There are even people who are dissatisfied with the present Minister.

Mrs COWAN: I believe that if they had a board in Melbourne earlier in the history of the water supply of that city, the condition of affairs which arose some time ago and which necessitated its appointment, would not have been recorded. I want the Minister to realise that the meetings which have been held by metropolitan members were only for the purpose of assisting him in overcoming the present difficulties. We would be quite willing to be guided and helped by him, and I trust he would find us willing to aid him, and I trust he would find us willing to aid him in arriving at a solution of what is, at present, a very great difficulty in connection with the metropolitan area.

Hon. P. Collier: This is quite a mutual admiration society.

The Minister for Works: In any case, these are the only courteous words that have been spoken to-night.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, RAILWAYS, £2,596,342.

**Legislative Assembly, 1 December 1921,
Hansard pp. 2063-2064.**

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth) [10.11]: It seems to me that the policy of management of the Railway Department is rather extraordinary in some respects. I do not know whether the attention of the Premier has yet been drawn to a matter which was brought to my notice, and to which I was asked to draw the attention of Parliament when the opportunity offered. I quote from the report of the recent interview between the Commissioner of Railways and representatives of the railway union -

Though various regulations and pension Acts prescribe the age of retirement from Government services, usually 60 years, and compulsory at 65, it has remained for the Chief Mechanical Engineer to create an innovation whereby men over 45 years of age were considered as unsuitable for a certain position. As such a proposal would have far-reaching effect, the joint railway unions took the question up and interviewed the Commissioner of Railways.

If the Railway Department, in its dealings with the officers, lays down as a principle that no one shall be promoted beyond the age of 45 years, the result must be most discouraging to officers of middle age. I am surprised to think it possible that this should be the policy of our government. The Commissioner is reported as having stated to the deputation -

After all it is giving an opportunity to the younger men, which they do not always get, and it counterbalances the few elderly men's dissatisfaction. I should have thought you would welcome it.

Mr Kenafick: They are very dissatisfied, because these men will be passed over in favour of a man they have been previously directing, and on top of that there will be the general application of the principle throughout the shop that the men will be view with alarm.

Mr Kenneally: The head of the branch admitted they were qualified.

The Commissioner: They were qualified, but too old.

Mr Kenneally: Two are 58.

The Commissioner: They are over 58.

Mr Kenneally: Suppose they were 46, you pass them over.

The Commissioner: That is so; you have to draw the line. We cannot expect a contented service doing its very best in the middle life if officers are to be passed over at the age of 45 for any promotion coming along.

Hon. P. Collier: The Commissioner would not have got his own job if 45 had been the limit.

Mrs COWAN: No; in that case we would not have the present commissioner. There is another anomaly to which I wish to draw attention, as regards clerical cadets. The standard in the past has been, I believe, the seventh standard of the Government schools, which is a good enough standard for all ordinary purposes, especially at the present time, when many people are unable to send their sons to the university. They would not be able to do this even if it remained free. Now, however, the standard set up by the Railway Department is that of the Junior University

examination. That seems to me a distinct hardship and hindrance to the many people who are debarred from sending their sons to the University, certainly now that fees are to be imposed. The handicap is an unfair one, and surely it does not represent the policy of the Government. Those are the two matters to which I wish to draw the attention of the Government. I have no personal concern regarding the cases of Mr Shillington and Mr Gallagher; but I certainly believe, and so do many right-thinking people, that it is a great mistake to keep a man in a position for 14 years, and then, if he is not for it, to pass him from that position to a higher one, superseding the man who has been qualifying and must be competent, otherwise he would not have been all those years filling the position of Superintendent of Transport. Those unjust things lead to unrest and dissatisfaction and cannot be beneficial to the public interests. Why was he not promoted long before, if it was right to promote him over the heads of men who had been qualifying for that particular position. The Government does not seem to realise the policy that has been followed in the railway department. It is possible that a little more interest should be taken in this matter. Even if the Commissioner has the absolute powers indicated, and he can not be removed from office for a period of seven years, it is reasonable to suppose that the policy of the Government could be indicated to him and an intimation conveyed to him that it was not being observed. I want to point out these anomalies and ask if it is any wonder that we have unrest and dissatisfaction in the Railway Department, if such is the attitude taken up by the man who is at the head of the service.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, PUBLIC UTILITIES, METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWAGE AND DRAINAGE, £113,091.

**Legislative Assembly, 13 December 1922,
Hansard p. 2202.**

Mrs COWAN: There is a good deal in the argument that it would be better if we had a board to control this particular department. It is unfair that the Minister for Works should be asked to carry out these heavy duties in addition to the many others that he has to perform. Everyone complains and throws the responsibility on the Minister, but do we always remember that Ministers are doing far more than their share. Therefore it might be a good reason if the Government were to consider the advisability of placing this department under the control of a board- I do not necessarily mean the municipality. I am not prepared, however, to express any special opinion on that subject at the present time, though I think the control should be given over to a board or trust. If the establishment of a trust or some such body were proposed, I would be prepared to support it. I trust, however, that he will be able to see his way to accede to the request. It is believed by many that the absence of an adequate water supply is preventing the carrying out of the deep drainage in West Perth. In answer to questions asked by me, the Minister stated that this had something to do with the matter, but that Subiaco, owing to the levels, had first to be sewered, and that an expensive pumping station would need to be erected in West Perth. I cannot help thinking, however, that the shortage of water has had the greatest effect in delaying this work.

The Minister for Works: Not at all.

Mrs COWAN: I hope that the matter will ultimately be remedied and that it will not be long before we shall get a better water supply than exists today. I am not blaming the Minister or his department, because as others have said, the department can only do what money will allow them to do. I consider that there should be two additional Ministers in this House to attend to the work of different departments if we expect it to be satisfactorily done.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTES, RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES, £2,552,000.

**Legislative Assembly, 9 January 1923,
Hansard pp. 2465-2468.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.50]: I congratulate the Minister very warmly on the able and concise manner in which he presented his Estimates. There can be no question that it is very helpful to listen to a statement so clear and revealing such a satisfactory position as he placed before us. Members generally must have been pleased to hear that many of the recommendations made by the Royal Commissioner, Mr Stead have been accepted, and that in future the Commissioner of Railways is to work on a policy which has been settled and laid down by the Government. The results have been good, and one realises it was well that the country went to the expense of holding an inquiry and obtaining the suggestions which were put forward. Even though some of the suggestions were old, there is nothing like emphasising such matters and bringing them more closely under the attention of the Government, while any new suggestions were still worthy of consideration. I am sure that Colonel Pope is quite capable of profiting by them. Reading some of his reports it is clear that he has in the past profited by the helpful suggestions made to him by the chief railway men of the Eastern States. I am sorry to have to allude to a subject to which two members have already referred. As a woman and a mother I wish to thank the Minister for the attitude he has adopted towards the charges made in connection with the case of an absolutely innocent girl. It was extraordinary and I might even say unpardonable on the part of any man—no matter how high his position might be, and the Commissioner of Railways is undoubtedly a very high one—to make such charges as he made in the newspapers before he was ordered by the Minister to hold the inquiry, more especially as the Commissioner has daughters of his own. The inquiry was held, and there are many people who thought and still think it would have been better had it been held by an absolutely outside authority, because the board of inquiry was composed of men who were still officers of the department and it has been said outside—I do not say it, because I do not know—that some of those men might have profited by the dismissal of the accused officer. I wish to remind the Committee in the interests of that young woman and also of Mr Shillington himself that the men who held the inquiry were the very ones after all who decided that he was innocent of the charges levelled against him, and that there had been no misconduct of any kind. He was retired because he did not get on satisfactorily with his superior officers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That should not be a reason for retirement.

Mrs COWAN: That is quite true, but personalities entered into the question. It is shown in the report of the Commissioner of Railways, who stated—

As to Mr Shillington's charges, I do not say much. They are the murmuring of a disgruntled and discredited man.

All I can say is that if the Government of this State allow it to be said that this officer was dismissed for misconduct and for being a discredited man, then they had not the right to pension him. I have heard and know that he cannot receive the pension unless a certificate is furnished testifying that the individual has been diligent and faithful. I can only say that this is a curious and most anomalous state of affairs. If the statements made regarding the dismissal and misconduct were in any way true, the country should not be saddled with the burden of a pension of £300 a year. The board of inquiry acted fairly and undoubtedly gave a right decision, according to its point of view. I hope in the future it will be distinctly understood, and I as a parent say it advisedly, that such charges as those made even by the Commissioner with impunity. I thank the Minister for the attitude he adopted regarding the matter. I have certainly been puzzled, and the same applies to

many people outside, as to why the man who acted in the pitiful role of informer was not censured. I do not wish to mention names. In such cases it is not advisable in the interests of the wives and families that names should be mentioned, but it should certainly have been a matter for censure that anyone living in a very objectionable class of house should give information such as this informer did in order to prevent harm and ingratiate himself with his superior officer. Mr Shillington was absolutely exonerated from the charges made, a point I wish to be distinctly emphasised. We must always deprecate the introduction of anything in the nature of personal animus in official places. If heads of departments cannot agree with officers holding 'important' positions under them, they should be all the more careful that they do not in any way lower the dignity of their positions by acting in the Manner in which I and many other people consider the Commissioner of Railways acted in this case. When the member for Yilgarn (Mr Corboy) was speaking the other night I was sorry to hear him take exception to the appointment of women as clerks in the Railway Department.

Hon W.C. Angwin: I want to see the men employed so that the women can get married.

Mrs COWAN: All the women cannot get married.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because they are taking men's jobs.

Mrs COWAN: I know the hon. Member would have it so but in other circumstances he might not be quite unwilling to be a potentate in India or some other such place and in his kindness of heart help these women with homes.

The Minister for Mines: Or Sultan of Johore.

The Chairman: I think you are reflecting on the hon. Member.

The Minister for Mines: No she is paying him a compliment.

Mrs COWAN: The hon. Member said he would like to see them all married, and so should I.

Mr Lambert: He said he would like to marry them all.

Mrs COWAN: I think it was a great mistake for the member for Yilgarn to speak as he did and I am glad the Minister again took the part of women and decided it was advisable to give them an opportunity to earn a living in the best way suited to their abilities.

The Minister for Mines: If they did not suit, we would not keep them.

Mrs COWAN: If that spirit is exhibited by men generally it will be necessary to follow the example of America. I refer to the formation of a women's party. There are many of us who do not wish to bring that about, but it may ultimately be necessary to have such a party to look after the interests of women. The effect of forming one would possibly be much stronger than some men realise. Women wish to work with men not against them, and we therefore desire that the men should work with us and not against us when it comes to a question of employment of women in positions in which they can obtain a satisfactory livelihood. I commend the Minister for his attitude on this question and upon his attitude to women generally. As a foundation member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals I was glad to hear the member for Murchison take up the cudgels on behalf of the stock in transit over the railways. I hope his remarks will appeal to the Government and that steps will be taken to prevent such cruelty being meted out to animals that are being brought down for consumption by the citizens of Perth. It is bad from every point of view that this state of affairs should be allowed to continue. With regard to refreshment cars, I was travelling in the train for a short time before I was taken ill. It seemed to me that it might be well if the Government took over the entire management of the railway refreshment cars. It may be thought that I am rather upholding my own sex when I say that the refreshment car that was controlled by young women very much better conducted than that which was controlled at the other end of the line by men. I only mention this to show that improvements can be effected in this direction. I daresay the men do their best but perhaps if the refreshment system were placed in charge of

women they might effect greater improvement. The member for East Perth has referred to the railway crossing in his electorate. To my mind the Melbourne road crossing in West Perth is even more important. I have repeatedly asked the Minister to do something to improve the position there but he seems to think I am only nagging him on the subject. The only way apparently for us to get anything is to keep nagging until something is done. The Melbourne road crossing in West Perth requires immediate attention. There is no more dangerous crossing on the railway system. I sincerely hope that all railway crossings that require overhead bridges will be attended to soon. The charges made by the railways for carrying small goods from here to Kalgoorlie and vice versa were excessive. When in Kalgoorlie I was asked why a particular brand of pickles was not sold in Perth. I was told that it would be impossible to make a profit on them, because the department charged 1s 9d. per dozen for every dozen bottles or tins of jams or pickles carried on the railways. That seems to me too heavy a charge. If the department would reduce the charge it would assist in the development of Western Australian industries. It is certainly a point to which attention might be given. There are many small things which could be carried on the railways if the freights were reduced. Most of us have experienced great inconvenience because of the brilliant and original idea of putting numbers on the tram cars. This is not done elsewhere that I know of. Strangers who come to town find it extremely difficult to pick out the right cars, and many of us who live here find it equally difficult. I do not always know where a tram is going because I am not familiar with the numbers. The cars also seem to travel at erratic times.

Mr Johnston: There is no board now to show where the tram is going.

Mrs COWAN: I do not know why all this money was spent in making such an inconvenient charge. It is a pity the boards are not put back. The numbers could be left on; for to remove them would further expense to the Government. Apparently expenditure on these matters is readily incurred, but when we ask for money from other departments we are told it cannot be given.

The Minister for Mines: Do you mean painting the designation on the cars.

Mrs COWAN: The old arrangement of turning up the destinations of the cars in the glass frames should be restored.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot get the material.

Mrs COWAN: The boards used to be there. Of course there may have been a great many breakages. Last Sunday the 'Sunday Times' made reference to the overcrowding of tram cars. This was in connection with the Nedlands route. It showed what great inconvenience the public was subjected to. There is neither a shortage of cars for the Nedlands track, or else the Como track takes so many of them that there are not enough left for Nedlands. Mothers and children are caused a great deal of inconvenience by reason of the overcrowded cars.

The Minister for Mines: Everybody makes it his business to travel at the same hour.

Mrs COWAN: Not at all. People are travelling all the while. I have no objection to the fares being raised for Sunday traffic. This would probably lead to men getting more hours off on Sunday. Further, it would not hurt people to stay at home on Sunday more than they do. Something, however, should be done with regard to the extra fares on holidays. These greatly affect mothers and children who cannot get away from their homes at other times. The railway fares have been increased, and for holidays and Sundays the fares on the trams have been doubled to the detriment of women and children whose bread-winners cannot afford to pay the double fares for a day's outing for their families. Doubtless because of the increased fares the Como trams are paying to an extent which they would not otherwise do. Consideration, however, should be had for the convenience of the public. Mothers and children are so anxious to get an outing that even the unpleasant weed that is cast upon the river shores at Como does not prevent them from travelling to that suburb. At the sea beaches there is no offensive spell, but the cost of getting there is even greater. Something should be done to reduce the fares if possible. I fail to see why it is not possible in the best interests of the community to do this. The railways as well as the tramways belong to the people, who should be the first consideration. I would point out that the small body of men who have raised the fares are men who travel free in both trains and trams.

Possibly that helps them to forget that there are other people who are not in the same position as they are.

Mr Clydesdale: It ought to be given six months' trial.

Mrs COWAN: One wonders what has become of the railway porters. I would draw the attention of the Minister to the published letter of January 4th on this question. The absence of porters has caused a great deal inconvenience to the travelling public. I was greatly surprised to hear the Minister say he did not approve the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner that three commissioners should be appointed to control our railways. I understood the Minister to say that the three commissioner system had proved a failure in the Eastern States. I have not read anywhere that it has been a failure. Even if one pays a little more by way of salary for two or three commissioners instead of one, it is far more satisfactory to do that if savings of thousands of pounds can be effected in other directions.

Mr Lambert: We might get a lady commissioner.

Mrs COWAN: In some respects we would be better for that, I think: or at any rate no worse.

Mr Lambert: You can say that with safety.

Mrs COWAN: In my opinion it is time for this State to apply the three commissioners system. Let us put in a man with practical experience to look after the traffic side of the system, and man with statistical knowledge and training to look after that side of the Railway Department, and then there would be no great injustice done to anyone. It would then be a case of the cobbler sticking to his last, and that has always been a good plan both in business and manufactures. I fail to see why it should not yield equally good results in railway management. As one State which has tried the three commissioners system with success is now proposing the appointment of a fourth commissioner, perhaps the matter is worthy of more consideration than our Minister appears to think. I would suggest to the Government that they do give the matter very serious and grave consideration, as a probable solution of some of our railway difficulties. There can be no question that in connection with our railways many things are unsatisfactory in various directions.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, LANDS AND SURVEYS, £96 446.

**Legislative Assembly, 18 September 1923,
Hansard pp. 746-747.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [9.30]: Do you rule, Mr Chairman, that it is out of order for a member to speak on such matters as medical attention at the group settlements? If so, it is very little use my attempting to speak on the subject at this time. There must be some vote under which we can discuss such matters, especially as many of us have received letters drawing attention in the strongest possible ways to the needs of the settlers. If we wish these people to be contented and happy on their groups the Premier must be made to understand the necessity for attending the details such as have been mentioned by the member for Sussex. I have spoken upon these matters myself. Complaints have been voted to us as members, as well as to organisations in which we are interested, showing the small efforts that appear to have been put forward for the comfort of settlers. A dwelling 10ft. by 8ft does not seem very palatial. I understand they used to be 20ft. by 8ft divided into two. They frequently have no window. It is understood that the settlers will put in windows of calico. I do not raise any objection to that. Is it not possible to provide extra shacks for medical purposes, or for temporary hospitals? These could be put up on the group settlements very cheaply, and would enable the people to have some of the decencies of civilisation in their present rough surroundings. Urgent cases of sickness may arise at any time, and do arise. The settlers incur a good deal of risk at present, and the provision of such medical facilities would be of very great help, especially to the women on the settlements.

The Colonial Secretary: There is a maternity hospital in Busselton.

The Chairman: The question can better be discussed under the vote "Department of Public Health".

Mrs COWAN: I will reserve any further remarks I have to make, and the correspondence I have to read until then.

Hon. M.F. Troy: Probably you are not aware, Mr Chairman, that the Department of Public health has nothing to do with group settlements.

Mrs COWAN: That is the trouble.

Hon. M.F. Troy: I do not want the objection raised, when we come to the votes controlled by the Colonial Secretary, that the discussion is outside the province of the Minister, but within that of the Premier. Group settlements are administered by the Premier, who is supposed to make full provision for medical, health, etc.

Mrs COWAN: He does not make any provision for that.

The Chairman: Do you dispute my ruling?

Hon. M.F. Troy: It is not desired to dispute your ruling. I have some correspondence regarding these matters, but I do not want the Colonial Secretary to say later on that it has nothing to do with him.

The Chairman: I will see that an opportunity is given to members to discuss this question.

Mrs COWAN: I do not complain that I have not had fair play. I have endeavoured in other ways to impress upon the Premier and the Colonial Secretary the necessity for something being done in

this direction. If you, Sir, say I cannot deal with these matters now, I will wait until later, unless I am to be ruled out of order then.

The Premier. How can you be ruled out of order?

Mrs COWAN: It is no use the Premier being annoyed. I have spoke to him about all this before.

The Premier. You come about them almost every day.

**ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, GOVERNMENT
SAVINGS BANK [RE-SALARIES OF
OFFICERS], £ 33,307.**

**Legislative Assembly, 25 September 1923,
Hansard p. 850.**

Mrs COWAN: The salaries paid to these officials are too low. It is astonishing to note the extreme youthfulness of the clerks employed in the Perth office as compared with those who were employed some time ago. I wonder if this is in pursuance of some special policy, and if youthful clerks are being employed at a lower rate than older and more experienced men. I do not know whether this is in the interests of the country, or of the persons concerned. I would rather see better salaries given to fewer and more experienced officials.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, INFANT HEALTH ASSOCIATION, CHILD CLINIC, £200.

**Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1923,
Hansard p. 895**

Mrs COWAN: I am glad to see the provision of money for the Infant Health Association. I hope the Premier will realise that the vote will require to be increased from time to time. Good work is being done in our midst and this shows that the departmental eyes have been opened to the worth of the work effected. I hope the Premier will see that the time becomes a permanent one and that he realises an increased amount will be needed.

ESTIMATE: ANNUAL VOTE, PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS, £81,557.

**Legislative Assembly, 27 September 1923,
Hansard p.913.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.33]: We can congratulate the Minister on many things connected with his department. I support the member for Sussex (Mr Pickering) in many of his remarks. When he spoke about the roads it seemed to me a dreadful condition of affairs. As a woman I thank him on behalf of the women of the State for the splendid way in which he to-night, and a few nights ago, spoke of the difficulties the women have to face, more particularly as regards hospital accommodation required under certain conditions. He gave a most graphic description of the difficulty of getting over some of the roads. It takes him four hours to travel over a distance of about 14 miles. When we realise that many of the group settlements are miles further away, what must be the length of time and the discomforts that the women have to endure? The member for Bunbury (Mr Money) also described the dreadful condition of the roads. He said that animals had suffered injury and some had even been killed when traversing those roads. I again stress the necessity for supporting the member for Sussex in his efforts to remedy it in other districts outside his own electorate, because there are a good many about whom no one seems to be troubling very much. I wish it were possible for the responsible Minister to provide in each of the group settlements a small shack where women could be accommodated, or cases of accident could be attended to by neighbours, or by any satisfactory help that could be arranged through certified women who understood how to nurse under the conditions that may arise in those settlements. While listening to the members for Sussex and Bunbury, I felt more and more how necessary it was to have women in this House, and how necessary it was for the women's organisation to come forward as they have done and are doing to take a hand in the matter of helping their sisters through what otherwise might mean a period of serious neglect that may prove very harmful to the settlement scheme, to say nothing of its ill-effects upon themselves and their children.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTE, POLICE, £179,489.

**Legislative Assembly, 16 October 1923,
Hansard p.1138.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.28]. I want the Minister to make a special note of what the Commissioner says in regard to wife and child desertion. The Commissioner suggests that money earned by a delinquent husband sent to prison should be available for his wife and children. The present law does not seem to bring home to such men their responsibility to the State or to their wives and families. I should like to see the law amended in that respect. I congratulate the women police on the splendid record they have put up. We have every reason to be proud that we have women doing such excellent work. Anyone who reads Appendix "F" must realise how fine that work has been, and what assistance it may be in reducing the amount of crime and lessening the temptations to young girls and boys. The Minister as well as Parliament must appreciate their work.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTES, OFFICE OF COLONIAL SECRETARY, £13 870.

Legislative Assembly, 30 October 1923,
Hansard pp.1217-1222.

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [8.32]: On many questions concerning the women, the Women's Home and the Old Men's Home, the Colonial Secretary has been sympathetic and helpful. His remarks about the visitors' committee show he has been fully apprised of the very valuable work the committee have done, and he must be in sympathy with their work, or he would not have spoken of them and of the after-care committee as he has done. The work of those two committees has been admirable, and has certainly helped to improve the conditions of the people in the asylum.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: We want to keep people out of the asylum.

Mrs COWAN: Good has been done regarding the care of the mentally deficient children, and the Minister has been extremely sympathetic. But more remains to be done, and I feel sure that when the Minister has had longer experience, he will realise, as many of us do, that this is one of the most important questions confronting the community. It means so much of the future of the nation, and I would like to see the Government make a much deeper study of the question. The Minister tells us he is still thinking of the proposal to spend £50,000 or £60,000 on a home for convalescents, and for a detention place for the mentally afflicted. It is a great pity that sufficient study is not given to this question so that everyone, more especially Governments, who have been handling such tremendous sums in what seems to be a futile way, might realise the best course to adopt. It is a great mistake to spend £50,000 or £60,000 merely to deal at the wrong end with a problem that has been occupying our attention too many years. The Government propose to deal with it this time in the middle; why not start at the beginning? Give the mentally deficient children a first chance. Many of them can be brought back to a normal condition, and those that cannot should be cared for in the asylum or in comfortable homes amid better surroundings, which would restore them to a condition more nearly approaching normal than could otherwise be hoped for. A great deal could be accomplished if we spent £10,000 on the mental detention ward. All we have at the hospital is that the black hole of Calcutta that we have had for many years. As a member of the hospital Board I, with others, have strongly depreciated its existence, but it has not been an easy matter to get anything done, because it was not considered conducive to the best interests of the inmates of the hospital for the board to say much about it. At last, however, it has been brought to the knowledge of the public in such a way that something must be done to remedy the existing dreadful state of affairs. Further, steps must be taken to provide better surroundings and care, but that can be done at less cost than the scheme proposed by the Government. The same applies to the convalescent home for the male patients. A good deal is being done for the convalescent women. If my suggestion that £10,000 be given for a mental ward and £10,000 for convalescent men were adopted, it would leave us with a sum worth handling to do something towards grappling with the real crux of the problem, namely, mental deficiency in its early stages, and that would ultimately save the State many thousands of pounds and give us a more satisfactory nation of people to deal with in time to come. I strongly object to and cannot possibly support the proposal to take one of our very best river resorts, almost the best is left, for a receiving home.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: The best is not too good.

Mrs COWAN: If that is so, why not be courageous enough to take King's Park?

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Because the people would not let us have it.

Mrs COWAN: The hon. Member would not be prepared to face that, but he does mind taking away from the people for all time a site not quite so well known, but equally beautiful. I deprecate strongly the proposal. One has only to go to the Eastern States to see how mistaken such a policy has proved. Now they are looking around and paying tremendous sums to remedy the mistakes made in the past years. We do not wish to make similar mistakes here. It is possible to get excellent surroundings for these people, all they need, something very much better than they have had in the "Black Hole", and by so doing we would not be dealing unfairly with the people that are sane and require these resorts and health places to help keep them sane.

The Colonial Secretary: In what State was a mistake made regarding the site of the reception home?

Mrs COWAN: The more one considers this matter, the more one must be convinced how mistaken the proposal is. It is possible to get good homes with good surroundings for those people, without interfering with the most beautiful site of all beauty spots surrounding our really beautiful city. I do not wish to see Perth copying Sydney and falling into a similar error. One of the things that appeal to me, more especially after listening to the member for South Fremantle (Mr McCallum), is that too much is asked of the head of the asylum. Why should we have to undertake secretarial and business work, and even look after the housekeeping, as he had to do in the past? It is only lately that a housekeeper has been appointed, and she has been appointed mainly in the interests of the staff, and not in the interests of the whole of the inmates. I notice in the report that the house-keeper has been given the new duty of looking after the meat supply and seeing that it is up to standard quality. As she did not have that duty previously, I suppose it was formerly left undone. Surely there should be a house keeper for the staff and another for the patients. We should not ask the leading medical man, whose whole time should be given to studying the welfare of the patients, to do a lot of drudgery that, in other parts, is not considered to be the work of the chief alienist.

Hon. P. Collier: He is not asked to do it. In the past he has refused to yield up any of his absolute powers in connection with the hospital.

Mrs COWAN: I have given to understand so, and it may be true, but if that be so, it does not make it right that his time should be occupied in attending to such duties. The patients should be occupied in attending to such duties. The patients should be our first consideration. The present condition of affairs cannot produce the greatest good for the inmates. Dr. Anderson does his best according to his lights, and I have always understood he was actuated more by desire to keep down expenses for the Department than anything else, in adopting the attitude he has done.

Hon. P. Collier: I do not know about that. Less motor car riding would keep the expenses down.

Mrs COWAN: The Minister spoke about the reduced cost, and no doubt he helped to attain that for the Government as it was expected of him. With regard to moving the natives from Carrolup to Moore River, I do not wish to comment on the merits or demerits of it, especially after the very caustic remarks of the member for Pilbara (Mr Underwood) but I would ask whether it has been really satisfactory from any other stand-point. Is it any less costly? I have heard that the saving supposed to be effected has not been realised, and as it is a long distance from the centre, one would like to know whether the supervision is sufficiently regular and close to make it of value to keep the place going, and look after the interests of the natives on it. There are many members of the community who question whether the conditions are the same now that they have been moved down there. Regarding State children, I do know whether the Minister has ever inquired as to how often those boarded out in country districts are visited by the officers, and whether surprise visits are made. Those children are placed in service far away in the country, and undoubtedly they should be subject to very close and good supervision. It is questionable whether this is possible without a bigger staff of inspectors. I was interested to hear the remarks of the Colonial Secretary about Mr Bulley. Coming into contact with him, we in the Children's Court realise he has far too much work to do. No one person can hope to thoroughly look after even the children on probation in the metropolitan area, though he be provided with a motor car. I think the Government might make use of honorary offices. I do not think their assistance has been encouraged to the extent that some of us would like to see it adopted. If such assistance were availed of, I am convinced it would help Mr Bulley to bring about an even more satisfactory state of affairs than is indicated by

the statistics. A perusal of the report of the Police Department shows that very fine work has been done by the women police, and that it has been the means of helping the State Children Department. The Salvation Army deserve great credit for the work they are doing in our midst. I do not want to know how the Government would get on without them, because of the manner in which they are looking after the mentally deficient children that they have been placed in their care. They are doing this work admirably for a certain number of boys, but I regret there is nothing on the Estimates dealing with the mentally deficient girls. The Salvation Army would take them on terms similar to those under which they take the boys, but I understand we cannot afford to attend to that side of the problem at present. This emphasises the fact that £10,000 out of the £60,000 could be very much better spent than in the manner proposed.

The Colonial Secretary: There are some girls at the Seaforth Home.

Mrs COWAN: How many of these are mentally deficient?

The Colonial Secretary: A few.

Mrs COWAN: Not many of them are accepted as mentally deficient, and they are not being treated as such.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: A place is being prepared in the asylum grounds for these people.

Mrs COWAN: I congratulate the government upon their immigration policy, which in many respects is satisfactory. I have not had many complaints, but there is one that was far as I know the Government have done nothing to remedy the matter. This is the letter I received -

As I believe you are one of the few who have the welfare of your country at heart. I am appealing to you for what I should call an urgent necessity. You are aware that out of a population of 340 000 in Western Australia there are 20,000 more males than females, and still more males are coming out. If this kind of thing goes on we will become monogamists. It is common to see 10 men to every woman among the farming districts, while in Perth and other large towns women predominate. Dozens of young men (farmers) have left their farms in disgust. I contemplate doing the same thing. The Western Australian girl dislikes the farm and to become a farmer's wife. She says "Don't be foolish, the idea".

The Colonial Secretary: That is a foolish statement.

Hon. P. Collier: He has had some bad refusals.

Mrs COWAN: There is so much noise going on around me that I am prompted to ask you, Mr Chairman-Am I making this speech or are other hon. members doing so?

The Chairman: Hon. Members must keep order.

Mrs COWAN: The letter continues -

There are nearly three million more females than males in Great Britain as wives for the men who are building up the country. As Oliver Goldsmith says: "Princes and lords may flourish or may fade, a breath can make them as a breath has made, but a bold peasantry their country's pride when once destroyed can never be supplied".

Hon. P. Collier: No wonder he was refused.

Mrs COWAN: The writer continues -

When we were in England and Scotland the young ladies begged us to take them out to Australia. Thousands of us did so, and thousands more would have done so

if they had not thought of the girl they had left behind them, only to find out on their or our return the girl engaged or married to some cold-footed waster.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is a libel on Western Australia.

Mrs COWAN: That is the complaint. He also says -

I think the under-mentioned scheme could be worked-a Government matrimonial bureau, a farmer requiring wife deposits £5 so that all applicants would be genuine, deposit refunded on presentation of marriage lines.

Hon. P. Collier: More State Enterprises.

Mrs COWAN: The letter continues -

Special agent told off to secure women for the country in Great Britain and Ireland. Women must be a certain standard, not weeds. It is a soldier who is writing and his letter is a genuine one.

Hon. P. Collier: How many pages does it run into?

Mrs COWAN: I was away when the letter arrived but it was answered by my daughter. I do not know if I am in order, but it does seem to me that members should give me a fair deal. There is always a considerable amount of interruption and conversation in a loud tone when I am speaking. I do not wish to have to apologise to the House in any way, or to be obliged to suggest that it is possible I am mistaken in thinking that members are other than gentlemen. I would, however, like a fairer hearing than members seem to be giving a women. I must therefore appeal to you, Mr Chairman, to see that I do get a hearing.

The Chairman: I will see that the hon. Member is not interrupted.

Mrs COWAN: In my daughter's reply to the writer of this letter she advises him to apply to the Immigration Auxiliary. She also advises him to get certain books, and quotes Kipling to him. Her reply to her is as follows :-

I can see that you are not too clear regarding my object in writing the letter to your mother. I will explain more fully. It is not the fact that we are lonely. I say "we" because I am speaking for hundreds more in a like position. The fact is we because I am speaking for hundreds more in a like position. The fact is we are battling along on our own. Just imagine this programme-5 a.m.: feed horse and stock: 5.30; start cooking breakfast, fried bacon and eggs and water; finish breakfast, 6.15; groom and harness horses, 6.45; arrive in the field, 7 a.m; 11.30 start for home; 11.45 feed up stock: start cooking dinner, 12 p.m. finish dinner 1 p.m.

He then gives the programme for the day, and continues-

Sunday: 7 a.m water and feed up, groom horses, cook breakfast, clean up house, wash clothes, dinner 1.30. One hardly wonders that he should want a woman to do all this for him. Mend harness and general repairs around homestead.

Mr Mann: You would not expect a woman to mend harness?

Mrs COWAN: No, He says further -

Feed stock, tea, feed up and bed. You will observe I have 1 1/4 hours a day to myself. By being married one can save 20 hours a week, or six weeks for the year.

Mr Marshall: It shows what he knows about married life.

Mrs COWAN: He goes on -

It is only the fact that I have spent £300 on the place in addition to Agricultural Bank advance that I am anxious to hang on.

He then speaks of a married couple who had decided to take the place on, and he says -

It makes one ashamed of his own countrywomen to see diggers wives going where the Australian girl will not go.

He states that he tried on two occasions to get married. The first time the girl said she would not face things in such a God-forsaken hole, and on the second occasion the father of the other girl said it was no good to him because there was no sort of comfort for his daughter. He then continues -

In your letter you say that books and papers are sent to the settlers. Don't you think they would be a poor substitute for a wife?

Hon. P. Collier: Poor lonely darling, mother's boy!

Mrs COWAN: He goes on to say -

If you suggest a better arrangement than the one I made out, I will be ready to hear from you.

The Minister for Agriculture: He is a pretty miserable specimen.

Mrs COWAN: He says he is the a man; I hope he is. He continues -

Tell your mother that if she does what I suggest re starting a State matrimonial bureau, she will have no trouble in getting in for one of the country districts, as the men and their wives would vote for her to a man or woman.

Hon. P. Collier: There is your chance.

Mrs COWAN: This is one of the worst complaints I have had regarding the troubles of the immigrants on the wheat belt, so they cannot be very badly used. I do not say this is one of the worst letters I have had in regard to troubles on the group settlements, but I shall come to that question at a later stage. When I was in the South-West I was asked if the Government would not do something to prevent the opossums from being killed and keep on the close season for a longer period. The people there wanted a close season for a year longer than the term proposed. I thought a longer period was to be allowed in future for a close season, one lasting for three years. The idea was later on, when the Government sustenance ceased and the settlers had to fend for themselves it would be profitable for them to trade in opossum skins, if regulations prevented people from killing them for a term of, say, three years. For the same reason it ought to be a good thing if the Government encouraged the growth of the boronia plant. Judging from the item printed in Saturday's paper, a considerable amount can be made by the new settlers if they cultivate boronia plantation for themselves. The plant is growing wild over many acres of ground, and, if the people were encouraged to preserve the plant and instructed as to the necessity for doing so, it would be a great help to them later on. On the whole it has been shown that things are better this year in the Colonial Secretary's department, and I hope they will continue to be as satisfactory in the future.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Hon W.C. Angwin:.

[Comment with reference to Mrs Cowan, Hansard, p. 1221).

...The member for West Perth (Mrs Cowan), who I am sorry to see *had* gone out, expressed regret that she did not get fair play in this chamber. I say that no member has been shown more fairness than the member for West Perth. That hon. Member should not forget that any person who comes to this House, man or women, is on equality with other persons hers. Every member irrespective of sex, is liable to be subjected to interjections. I consider that the member for West Perth has no grounds whatever to complain of her treatment in this Chamber. She expressed her strong sympathy with the unfortunate people who are placed in our mental institutions, but at the same time she declared that some position on the river was too good for them. 'We have no right', she said, to put these people on any piece of land that abuts on the river foreshore; they can be placed elsewhere'....

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mrs COWAN: There are plenty of water frontages along the river apart from Point Resolution.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: Yes, from which nothing can be seen. At Callan Park one can see the motor cars running about the streets in the city. At Broughton Hall, not far from Callan Park, the patients have a view of the traffic in one of Sydney's main thoroughfares. At Darlinghurst, right in the heart of the city, there is a hospital where people can go in and out as they desire.

Mrs COWAN: What is the objection to that sort of thing here?

Hon. W.C. Angwin: The hon. Member said we should not take away the people's playing ground.

Mrs COWAN: We should not take away reserves set apart for the people.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Mrs COWAN: One of the objects in getting the hospital is that they want people who will not require professional assistance.

Hon. W.C. Angwin: They will require that assistance.

Mrs COWAN: I am told they will not.

The Colonial Secretary: Of course they will want someone to look after them.

***[OTHER SPEAKERS]

Hon. W.C. Angwin: That is so. It shows that while we preach that nothing is too good for the sick and the afflicted—nothing could be worse than mental affliction—our actions are not in accordance with what we preach. I never believed that Parliament would agree to give up Point Resolution for this purpose. It was because of that I did not take the Victorian Inspector General of the Insane to see Point Resolution.

Mrs COWAN: There are other river frontages.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTES, RAILWAYS, £2,235,000

**Legislative Assembly, 8 November, 1923,
Hansard p. 1411.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [7.41] I congratulate the Minister on the improvement in the railway finances. I would like to remind him that when I asked him a question last year regarding the railway crossing at Melbourne road, his answer was that when the finances improved something might be done.

The Minister for Mines: I cannot give any promise now as I would be committing my successor.

Mrs COWAN: The crossing there is a particularly dangerous one and it would be a matter of satisfaction to the public, even though the Minister intends to retire from politics, if he would give an assurance that something will be done.

The Minister for Works: The money was voted and the land resumed years ago, so why has not something been done?

Mrs COWAN: I was glad to hear the Minister announce that a reduction had been made in the freights for fruit. That is a wise move. I am sure an advantage will be reaped by the Commissioner as well as by the people in the metropolitan area. Cheap fruit is necessary for the children in particular and for the public in particular and for the public in general during the summer months and I commend the Commissioner and the Minister for this relief.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTES, STATE HOTELS, £52,465

**Legislative Assembly, 20 November 1923,
Hansard p. 1530.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [10.26]: It has been extraordinary to hear such unedifying revelations as have been made regarding State hotels. When State hotels are conducted in such a manner, we can hardly wonder that a large section of the community favour prohibition. It makes one think that possibly the private hotels have not been any better inspected. I urge the Minister strongly in the interests of the men against whom members have spoken so strongly-the heads of the department-and in the interests of the public to see that further inquiry is made. Otherwise, I cannot imagine that members of the House will be satisfied, and certainly the general public will not be satisfied.

ESTIMATES: ANNUAL VOTES, RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS, £925,000

**Legislative Assembly, 27 November 1923,
Hansard p. 1623.**

Mrs COWAN (West Perth) [4.45]: Earlier in the session I asked the Minister for Railways for an assurance that when a tramway was constructed to the Perth City council endowment lands, it would not be taken past the Thomas-street school. That route would involve expensive cuttings, to say nothing of endangering the lives of the school children. The Minister asked me to defer the matter until the Loan Estimates were considered, and I should like to know whether the Government are prepared to give an assurance.

The Premier (Hon. Sir James Mitchell-Northam) [4.47]: A tramway to serve the endowment lands must go in the direction indicated, but if it can be taken by another route, that will be done. The matter will receive consideration.

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